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I

THE PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE

Marie Thérèse Louise de Savoy-Carignan,
Princesse de Lamballe.
From a print after the picture by L. E. Rioult.

THE PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE

A BIOGRAPHY

BY

H. C. HARDY

LONDON
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1907

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BY

B. C. HARDY

'Plutôt mourir que changer'

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'She was beautiful, she was good, she had known no happiness. Young hearts, generation after generation, will think with themselves: O worthy of worship, thou king-descended, god-descended, and poor sister-woman! why was not I there; and some Sword Balmung or Thor's Hammer in my hand?'

CARLYLE'S *French Revolution*
(vol. iii. book i. chap. iv.)

CHAPTER I

THE HOUSE OF SAVOY

MUCH has been written of the French Revolution, its chief actors and its most exalted victims. Much yet remains to write; for in that storm of wills and passions things beautiful and terrible were done, such as the generations cannot choose but remember, when, with an insatiable hunger, they turn yet again to that thunderous page on which is written the History of the Terror. But above the midnight wrack shine many starry deeds, and the nature in us invokes recital of these as an only possible palliative to the scarcely credible horrors with which they stand surrounded. And surely, of all who fell in that dark time, few were more innocent and more terribly fated than Marie Thérèse Louise de Savoy-Carignan, Princesse de Lamballe.

The House of Savoy, of which this princess was a member of the younger and the now sole surviving branch, has left its mark far back upon the history of central Europe. Humbert of the White Hands, Count of Maurienne, traditionally said to be descended from Witikind, the great Saxon, was first invested

by the Emperor Conrad with the counties of Chablais and Lower Valais, till then part of the Burgundian kingdom. Humbert died in 1048, and his successor Otho added the marquisate of Susa and the counties of Val d'Aosta and Turin (acquired by marriage) to his inherited possessions; the next two counts brought respectively the province of Bugey and the lordship of Tarantaise to the rapidly growing realm, and Amadeus III. (1103-49) first styled himself Margrave of Turin and *Count* of Savoy. The next Amadeus was created Duke of Chablais and Aosta; Peter (1263-8) gave his niece in marriage to King Henry III. of England, lived much in that country, and built the Savoy Palace in London; Amadeus V. (and the Great) was made a Prince of the Empire. In 1416 the Emperor Sigismund created Amadeus VIII. *Duke* of Savoy and Piedmont, and by this time the dominion of Savoy extended from the Lake of Geneva to the Gulf of Genoa, from the Saône to Maggiore, and to Vercelli and Alessandria in Piedmont, no inconsiderable realm. Amadeus, however, soon resigned his dukedom for a monastery, whence he was called by the Council of Basle in 1439 to be Pope under the title of Felix V. in place of the deposed Eugenius IV. This dignity too he resigned after nine years, and became a Cardinal, dying three years later.

The dukedom had risen so far with too rapid and unbroken strides to be exempt from a certain amount

of misfortune, which arrived during the reign of Charles III. (1503-53). Francis I. of France clashed with the Emperor Charles V.; Savoy sided with the latter, and in the years of unrest many of her provinces were temporarily lost. Victory returned, however, with the accession of the next duke, Emmanuel Philibert (1553-80), only to fluctuate again under his son, Charles Emmanuel (1580-1630). This Charles Emmanuel it was whose fourth son, Tomaso Francesco, was created Prince of Savoy-Carignan, the line from which the present sovereign of Italy is directly descended, and of which the subject of this memoir was a distinguished member. One of Tomaso's sons, Eugène, married the beautiful Olympe Mancini, niece of Cardinal Mazarin, and of their eight children one was the famous 'Prinz Eugen, der edle Ritter'; but the descent of Savoy-Carignan passed not through him, but through Emmanuel Philibert, the deaf prince, who died in 1709, aged seventy-nine, and whose grandson, Louis Victor Amadeo Joseph, married Christine Henriette of Hesse-Rheinfels-Rothenburg, and was the father of Marie Thérèse Louise.

The direct succession of Savoy meanwhile passed through Charles Emmanuel I.'s son and grandson to his great-grandson, Victor Amadeus II. (1673-1730), in whose person, 1720, the Dukes of Savoy were henceforth created *Kings* of Sardinia. Victor Amadeus was a great soldier and a distinguished man. He married Anne Mary, daughter of Philip, Duc

d'Orléans, and Henrietta, youngest child of Charles I. of England, through whom, as the accompanying table will show, derives Princess Mary of Bavaria, the present 'Legitimist' Queen of England; but after his wife's death he became enamoured of the beautiful Countess of Sommariva, and, weary of public life, abdicated in favour of his son, Charles Emmanuel III., and retired, as the Conte di Tenda, to Chambéry, where the couple were privately married. The sequel is somewhat reminiscent of a more modern King Lear. Either because he considered the kingdom badly governed, or because the fair Countess teased him to make her a queen, after a year's retirement Victor Amadeus suddenly announced his intention of resuming the kingship, and boasted that his first act should be to behead all the ministers of his son. The threat became known, and the ministers heartily agreed that the ex-King should be seized. He was taken and kept in solitary and absolutely silent confinement at Rivoli, the reason given being that his mind was unhinged, and all to whom he spoke were permitted only to reply by low and respectful bows. If not so already, such treatment was certainly calculated to make him really mad; but after a while these rules were lightened, and he was allowed the society of his wife. He died, however, shortly after, an old and broken man.

In spite of this drastic treatment of his father, Charles Emmanuel III. seems on the whole to have

been a good king. He reigned from 1730 to 1773, and was thus head of the family when our little princess, Marie Thérèse Louise, was born. He and her father married sisters, his second wife, by whom alone he had children, being Polixene Christine of Hesse-Rheinfels-Rothenburg; and our princess could thus claim first cousinship to his children through her mother, besides the more remote branch relationship.

The future Princesse de Lamballe was the fourth daughter of her parents, and was born on the 8th September 1749, at the Palazzo Carignano in Turin. At the moment of her birth the populace was celebrating with much shouting and ringing of bells the anniversary of the relief of Turin by the French troops in 1706. The streets were full of people, cheering and singing, wild with the Italian excitement which rejoices over any *festa*, and the first sound—as it was the last—to fall upon the ears of the little Louise must have been the long roar of the mob.

Little is related of her childhood, and nothing that is really authentic. She was one of a family of eight, and throughout her life seems to have been devotedly attached to all her relatives, but particularly to her brothers, Louis Victor and Eugène Marie. The Court of Sardinia was simple almost to severity; she had good parents and a happy home, and the contentment which absence of history is said to imply in woman was certainly hers for the first eighteen years

of her life. The Palazzo Carignano, where she dwelt with her parents, designed by Guarini and long unfinished, was used later as the Chamber of Deputies, and as such is still shown; this was not, however, till after 1831, when, the direct line having died out, our princess's grand-nephew was chosen King of Sardinia, the present King of Italy being his great-grandson.

CHAPTER II

1767

On the 8th January 1767 a formal offer for the hand of Mademoiselle de Savoy-Carignan was made to the King of Sardinia by M. de Choiseul-Beaupré, ambassador at Turin of Louis xv. of France, on behalf of the Duc de Penthièvre for his only son, Louis Alexander Joseph Stanislaus, Prince de Lamballe.

Marie Thérèse Louise was now eighteen. An alliance with France had long been desired by the House of Savoy, and the one proposed would rank the bride with the French Princes of the Blood, under which title the nephews and cousins of the King were known, the Princes of the Royal Family being his children or grandchildren alone. The marriage, in fact, seems to have been considered a very magnificent one for the young princess, since it will be remembered that the kingdom of Sardinia was of very recent origin, and she herself belonged only to the younger branch. The Duc de Penthièvre was the son of the Comte de Toulouse, whose parents had been Louis xiv. and Madame de Montespan; he was the wealthiest nobleman in all France, and,

better still, the most upright and virtuous; he held innumerable honours, besides being Grand Admiral of France and First Huntsman of the Royal Hunt; he possessed eight magnificent residences, and was revered and adored by all who knew him. Madame de Montespan's six children had all been legitimised, and her two sons raised to the rank of Princes of the Blood, and actually placed in the line of succession; M. de Penthièvre was, after his uncle the Comte d'Eu, their sole representative, and following him, his son the Prince de Lamballe. All historians unite in agreeing that had the Duc de Penthièvre but succeeded to the throne as legitimate heir of Louis XIV., the French Revolution might have remained an unwritten page of history; and he was in fact the only nobleman who remained unmolested on his estates during the disturbances until his death.

Very little seems to have been known or inquired about the prospective bridegroom himself; it was sufficient that he was the son of the good Duc. Yet, with all the virtues of Penthièvre—and spite of the exaggerations of French writers, it is plain that he must indeed have been a really fine gentleman—one finds it difficult to forgive him for demanding a young and innocent girl in marriage for the incorrigible rake whom he was unfortunate enough to own for son. It is not unusual, when any quality is cultivated almost to excess in one generation, to find it entirely absent from the next, and this was emphatically the case

with M. de Lamballe. Only nineteen, handsome and fascinating in the extreme, he had yet entered so early upon a vicious career that even his father, long blinded to his true character, began to feel uneasy, and, casting about for some means of reformation, clutched desperately at the hope that marriage with a charming princess might accomplish all that parental remonstrance and despair had failed to achieve. The story goes that M. de Penthièvre first became suspicious of his son's tastes some years before in consequence of his frequent and mysterious absences from home. He bade a servant follow and watch him, promising him fifty louis for his trouble, but the next day, when the servant proceeded to obey his instructions, the young Prince suddenly turned upon him and demanded for how much he had been set to spy upon him. Taken aback, the man faltered out the truth. 'Then,' said Lamballe, 'I will give you fifty louis to go back at once, and fifty blows on the head if you do not.' Anxious to please all sides, the spy accepted the money of both, and reported to his master that the Prince went disguised to render acts of charity to the poor, a harmless amusement in which M. de Penthièvre himself was frequently wont to indulge.

One cannot help thinking that if the Duc really permitted himself to accept this statement, he must have been quite colossally obtuse. Himself the only child of elderly parents, his personal tastes were

possibly quite different from those of his son; but he had moved much about the world, and no doubt knew the peculiarly corrupt age he lived in well enough. His biographers would have us believe him devoid of every human fault and failing, but he himself always laid claim to a fiery temper, which he declared he had had uncommon difficulty in subduing; and in fact, spite of the sugary adjectives with which his name is clogged throughout history, and which are really rather calculated to prejudice a later generation against him, we may take him on the whole for a man of character, a good man, and one of the most charitable and tender-hearted of fathers. At seventeen he had distinguished himself at the battle of Fontenoy; and two years later he married a daughter of the Duc de Modena, to whom he was always devotedly attached, and who bore him seven children before her death in 1754. Only two of these survived childhood: M. de Lamballe, and Louise Marie Adélaïde, Mademoiselle d'Yvoy, later de Bourbon-Penthièvre. His wife's death so affected the Duc de Penthièvre that he immediately sought a retreat at La Trappe for some weeks, and every year after repeated his visit at the same time under the incognito of the Comte de Dinan. On leaving the monastery he went to Italy, was received at Rome by Pope Benedict XIV., and then proceeded to Naples and Modena, returning to France again only in time to be present at his mother's death.

Wild rumours were naturally rife as to the reason for the widowed Duc's journey. Some felt sure he meant to enter the Church, and wished to persuade the Pope to make him a Cardinal; others that he intended to demand a dispensation to marry his sister-in-law, Princesse Mathilde de Modena. Probably there was as much truth in both these stories as in the very doubtful one that he visited Turin during his wanderings, and while there became particularly charmed with little Louise de Savoy-Carignan, at that time not much more than five years old. The narrator of this fable proceeds to state that the marriage was practically settled on the spot, and the youthful princess at once called to do homage to her future father-in-law. 'How would you like to be the consort of the Prince de Lamballe?' he asked her. 'Oh, very much! I am so fond of music!' replied the bewildered little person; but then, when he explained, 'No, no, my dear, I mean would you have any objection to be his wife?' the answer was, 'Oh, no indeed! Nor anybody else's either!' At which we are told all the spectators laughed immoderately. Unfortunately for the authority of this pretty tale, the Duchesse de Penthièvre is mentioned as having also been present, when it was, in fact, in consequence of her death that the journey was taken.

But there can be no doubt that the Duc de Penthièvre cherished a great affection for the House

of Savoy; and that, when he spoke to Louis XV. of his wish to find a suitable wife for his only son, the King's suggestion of the daughter of the Prince de Savoy-Carignan fell in very appositely with his own desires. The formal demand for the lady's hand was of course only the official close to a long and minute private correspondence; indeed, Louis announced the approaching marriage to the Princes of the Blood at Versailles the day before his formal letter was handed to the King of Sardinia.

On the 14th January the King of Sardinia declared the betrothal to his nobles, and three days later the contract was signed and the act received by the Conte de Saint-Victoire, minister of state, and notary of the Crown for the occasion. The bride's dowry from her father and mother was to be 150,000 livres (Piedmont money, making 180,000 livres French), and a trousseau of 18,000 livres; she was, however, to give up all further claim upon her parents' estates in favour of her brothers and their children. The gifts she received were magnificent, and the list of her diamonds alone, mostly presented by the Duc de Penthièvre, would fill many pages to describe. In the event of her becoming a widow, she was to receive 60,000 livres French, and a life-interest on 30,000 livres a year, besides sixteen dresses and other objects for her use to the amount of 75,000 livres.

The marriage took place on Saturday, the 17th

January 1767, in the royal chapel of the palace, and was solemnised by Cardinal Delance, the king's almoner. Prince Victor Carignan, the bride's brother, acted proxy for her unknown bridegroom; and immediately after the ceremony, the King of Sardinia led the newly made Princesse de Lamballe to the state apartments, where a magnificent bed had been prepared, on which she lay down fully dressed, before the whole court. Her proxy-brother removed one shoe and stocking only and lay beside her, this being a usual custom in such cases, to symbolise the full completion of the marriage and to entitle the wife to her full settlements and legacies even in the event of her husband's death before the couple met.

Next followed a splendid banquet, at which the bride appeared for the first time in a French costume sent by her husband, while all the other ladies present wore Italian dresses, and looked, we are told, very old-fashioned and strange beside her. Here, too, she seems first to emerge from the vagueness of her girlhood, an authentic and a very attractive figure. With features too irregular to be classed as strictly beautiful, her large blue eyes, her wealth of fair hair, her charming shape, and, above all, her peculiarly sweet smile and gentle manner, seem nevertheless to have struck all she met with admiration and delight; and her very simplicity in that corrupt and artificial age must have dowered her

with a piquancy and a restfulness all the more pleasing for its rarity.

The wrinkled old King of Sardinia enjoyed himself at this banquet, seated beside his beautiful niece. His own eldest son was married to a Spanish princess, and already boasted a numerous family; and in triumph at having at last obtained an alliance with France, the King whispered to the bride that now she was going away she must not forget his little grand-daughters, but, when she could, arrange good French marriages for them also. Certainly, whether by her doing or not, the King had his wish, for two of these little girls ultimately married future kings of France, though both died before their husbands came to the throne; and Madame Clothilde, sister of Louis XVI. of France, in her turn married Charles Emmanuel's grandson, later King Charles Emmanuel IV.

There was to be no delay in bringing the new Princesse de Lamballe to her husband: and the very next day she left Turin with her attendants. All the city came out to see her go, for she had been much loved, and her bright face and kindly smiles would no doubt be greatly missed: there lies always some sadness in farewells, and certainly this occasion held very special opportunities for it. But when one is young, the future beckons with many and rosy hopes; and, at any rate, no lingering was to be permitted; every day's journey for the bride had been settled in advance by the King of France himself: and on

January 24th the bridge of Beauvoisin, the frontier between Savoy and France, was reached.

Here the French Princess must bid farewell for ever to her Italian home and attendants, and travel on alone with the new suite sent to meet her. The Chevalier de Lastic, charged with the care of her arrangements, presented to her the Comtesse de Guébriant and the Marquise d'Ache, her new ladies-in-waiting: and she bade farewell in tears to the familiar friends who had accompanied her till now. As she looked back over the mountain road by which she had come, a sudden presentiment of misfortune overcame her, and for some time she was unable to speak. Then she stepped into the magnificent carriage sent for her, and drove on. The unfortunate ladies returning to Turin by the Mont Cenis Pass were attacked meanwhile by a severe snowstorm, and many of them died of cold and exposure.

The Princesse de Lamballe was to meet her husband and his father for the first time on the 31st of January at Nangis. The night before she spent at Montereau, where an extremely handsome page, tall and beautifully attired, demanded to see her, and presented her with a magnificent bouquet and some charming compliments on behalf of his master the Prince. The bold eyes of the good-looking youth seem to have left a deep impression upon the bride, and she remarked after to one of her ladies, 'I hope my prince will allow his page to attend me often, for I like him much.' But

the next day, Nangis reached, and the Duc de Penthièvre and his son hurrying forward to receive her, to her great surprise she perceived that the page and his master were one. The young Prince had been so impatient to behold his wife that he could not wait for the formal introduction; and the glimpse he had thus unconventionally secured had already plunged him madly in love with her. As for her, very young and very romantic, the little incident was quite sufficient to rivet the young affections of her heart for ever. There can be no question it was a genuine case of love at first sight; and the good Duc de Penthièvre already felt his dearest hopes in a fair way to be realised.

Nangis is a pretty village, clustered round the castle, belonging at that time to the Comte de Guerchy, by whom it had been placed at M. de Penthièvre's disposal for this occasion. The Comte and Comtesse de la Marche assisted him to receive the invited guests: the village was gaily decorated, and all haste was made to the private chapel of the Guerchys, where the union of the young Prince and Princesse de Lamballe was once more formally blessed by the Cardinal de Luynes. Only one night did the party rest here, travelling next day the last stage of the journey to Paris, where at M. de Penthièvre's magnificent residence, the Hôtel de Toulouse (now the Banque de France), a splendid banquet was given that same evening. Covers were laid for one hundred

and thirty, and it was remarked that it was long since so many Princes of the Blood had been seen together at the same board. Among them were the Duc d'Orléans, the Duc de Chartres, the Prince de Condé, the Duc de Bourbon, the Prince de Conti, the Comte de la Marche, the Comte de Clermont, and the Comte d'Eu. During the entertainment a lengthy ode was recited in honour of the bride and bridegroom.

> 'Deux jeunes cœurs, formés du sang des rois,
> Épris tous deux de l'ardeur la plus belle,
> Veulent s'unir d'une chaîne éternelle':

sang the poet, and indeed at the time it seemed as if all this was true enough. One eyewitness records that, in spite of the magnificence and the diamonds and the splendour at this banquet, there was little gaiety, and frequent ominous silences fell. But it is certain that at the time no evil omens were marked, and life seemed opening fair and golden before the princely pair.

CHAPTER III

1767-8

FOUR days later, on the 5th of February, the Princesse de Lamballe was presented at court by the Comtesse de la Marche. She made an entirely favourable impression, and the following afternoon the King and the whole royal family paid her the compliment of a visit, all of which is scrupulously entered in the careful diary kept by Louis XV.

The royal family of France at this time consisted of the King, Louis *le Bien Aimé*, aged fifty-seven (who, in his fifty-two years' reign, had done little to justify his existence, and nothing to improve France either for his people or his descendants; who thought only of his vicious pleasures and his jaded appetite, boasted of being the best cook in France, and when warned of already smouldering rebellion, replied cynically that the monarchy would last his time at least); his Queen, poor faded Maria Leczinska, daughter of Stanislaus, King of Poland; and their four unmarried daughters, Mesdames Adélaïde, Victoire, Sophie, and Louise, the youngest of whom rapidly approached her thirtieth year. Louis' only

son had died little more than a year before, and his wife the Dauphiness, daughter of Augustus the Strong of Saxony, was so broken-hearted at her loss that she was slowly killing herself with grief and melancholy, shut up in a room hung round with black, and contemplating every hour her dead husband's portrait: she died, in fact, in the March of this same year. The young family she left behind had aroused little interest in her: it might have been well could she have cared more for the education and development of certain of its members. But her eldest and promising son, the Duke of Burgundy, had died at the age of eleven, and poor, heavy, slow-witted Louis, now fourteen, and Dauphin of France since his father's death, fated to move through scenes of high historic tragedy, was evidently no attractive youth—shy, silent, and always pathetically conscious of the far more suitable qualities of his younger brothers for the distinguished post to which he himself was destined. These younger brothers, Louis Stanislaus Xavier, Comte de Provence, and Charles Philippe, Comte d'Artois, with their sisters, Clothilde the fat —'Gros Madame' she was called when she grew up—and baby Elizabeth, were as yet little more than children, and could not contribute much to the brilliance of the Court.

It was therefore not a particularly gay circle upon which Madame de Lamballe entered on her arrival in France, but no doubt it appeared very strange

and delightful to her young eyes, and at such entertainments as were given she was always accorded a distinguished place. The Prince de Conti gave a *fête* entirely in her honour at Paris, but insisted that no one should be asked who had not first been introduced to his daughter-in-law, the Comtesse de la Marche, a stipulation which Lauzun says produced much bitter feeling. This Comtesse de la Marche (afterwards Duchesse de Conti) was a princess of Modena, and related to the late Duchesse de Penthièvre: her husband was the last of the branch, but the marriage was not, upon the whole, a very happy one. Madame du Deffand, writing to Horace Walpole this February, cries: 'Oh, do not ask me the details of all the quarrels and bickerings in connection with the *Noce Lamballe.* These are pure miseries, which I shall tell you when we meet, and then you will bid me hold my tongue.'

At the King's great review on the 1st July the Princesse de Lamballe is especially mentioned as being present. She saw also a good deal of the d'Orléans family: and her relations with her husband's people were of the happiest. Nothing could have been kinder than the fatherly affection of M. de Penthièvre, or the adoration of his little daughter for the pretty Italian bride. Mademoiselle d'Yvoy was at this time fourteen: her mother died when she was barely a year old, and she had been brought up in the Benedictine convent at Montmartre, where the good Madame de la

Rochefoucauld was abbess, and where she had formed an intense friendship with another young lady, two years older than herself, Mademoiselle Eugénie de Montigny. It was the age of great friendships, and the very subject of this memoir was destined to prove to the world in her own person how great and noble a thing friendship between two women may become. On the whole, for the first few months of their marriage the Lamballes were an ideally happy couple, and by the end of March the Prince wrote to his father that he no longer desired a certain pack of hounds, without which he had formerly professed himself unable to exist. Nothing now could be welcome that might call him from his home: and certainly a happier outlook upon life seemed impossible.

The villain of the piece enters early upon the scene in the person of Louis Philippe Joseph, Duc de Chartres, afterwards the infamous 'Egalité' d'Orléans. Chartres was some seven years older than Lamballe, whom he is credited with having introduced to all the evil destined to bring ruin to himself and sorrow and misery to those who loved him. He was a wild young man, handsome and fascinating, the son of a bad mother, and some even cast doubts upon his legitimacy as heir to the Duc d'Orléans. There is no doubt that he held great influence over the weak and vicious young Prince de Lamballe, though it is improbable that he meant so ill towards him as some have

declared. There had always been some idea of a marriage ultimately to be arranged between him and Lamballe's sister, who, if her brother should die without children, would stand sole heiress to the immense wealth of Penthièvre : he is therefore charged with a desire to bring about this consummation by breaking down the weakly constitution of the young Prince by wild and reckless living. On the other hand, it has been said that the Prince de Lamballe required no introduction to vicious courses, since he was a past master in all of them himself; nor is it likely that, if any suspicions of the sort were seriously entertained at the time, the Duc de Penthièvre would ever have allowed the much discussed marriage to take place, as it finally did some years later. At the same time, allusions to the culpability of Chartres in the matter are so universal in the memoirs of the period that one cannot but suppose him not entirely innocent.

M. de Lamballe had already had many 'adventures.' There is an extraordinary story in the memoirs of the Marquise de Créquy concerning a clandestine marriage alleged to have been performed, with the connivance of the Duc de Chartres, by one of the chaplains of the Palais Royal, between Lamballe and a beautiful peasant girl, Geneviève Galliot, with whom he had fallen in love during his solitary and delicate youth in the castle of Anet. Geneviève was one of the favourite models of Greuze, and the much admired

'Cruche Cassée' was probably painted from her. After the marriage, being fearful of informing his father, the boy-prince took a little house for his wife at Clamart-sous-Meudon, where she lived as Madame de St. Paer; but he quickly tired of her, neglected her society, and at last she took poison and died. M. de Penthièvre heard the story, and acknowledged his daughter-in-law on her deathbed. She was buried in the cathedral at Dreux beside his wife, the late Princess of Modena, and two years later the Prince de Lamballe married Mademoiselle de Savoy-Carignan.

It is scarcely necessary to point out the discrepancies with which this story teems. To take one instance out of many, the Penthièvre coffins were not removed from Rambouillet to Dreux till 1783, and the whole tale may very well be set down as one of the unfounded rumours of the period; but there is unfortunately no question about the more disgraceful affairs in which this unhappy young man was involved only five months after his marriage. First came an intrigue with a young comedy actress, Mdlle. de la Chassaine, who was 'plain and uninteresting,' say contemporary chroniclers, but who bragged openly of her power over him. Bachaumont, in whose *Secret Memoirs* most of the scandals of the day find a delighted place, notes on the 28th July that 'Mdlle. de la Chassaine, a young actress of the Comédie Française, and niece of Mdlle. de la Motte,

ancient *coryphée* of that theatre, is to-day the object of the attention and jealousy of all her comrades. Although not pretty, and of very mediocre talent, she has been honoured with the favours of the young Prince de Lamballe, but newly married.' The scandal soon leaked out, and naturally could not be kept long from the ears of the young Princesse. She had always been rather delicate in health, and the shock of this sudden disillusionment was terrible to her youth and innocence. She loved her husband with real tenderness, and had believed most sincerely in his affection for her. What she now heard appeared absolutely impossible. She became alarmingly ill, fell from fainting fit to fainting fit, was attacked with convulsions, and the good Duc de Penthièvre was in despair for her.

Bored, and quite careless of her grief, the Prince declared himself watched too well at home, and left the Hôtel de Toulouse, in order to be more free. His father followed him, himself interviewed La Chassaine, promised to care for her and her expected child if she would immediately leave the country, and by means of pathetic adjurations induced Lamballe to return home. For a short while all was forgiveness and peace. La Chassaine went to Russia and pursued her wiles on others; but almost immediately a fresh infatuation seized the young Prince for another actress, Mdlle. de la Forêt, a woman of very low class; and he again forsook his wife for

her. In the end of September La Forêt disappeared, and on the 4th November Bachaumont chronicles: 'We have mentioned the flight of Mdlle. de la Forêt, to the great regret of a young prince lately married, who had conceived a dangerous passion for her. We now know the cause of this precipitate action. Her lover had presented her with a large part of the princess's diamonds. . . . At last she has been wise enough to present herself to the Duc de Penthièvre, father of the young prince, bringing the diamonds, and throwing herself upon her knees to implore his mercy. The Duc seemed satisfied with this step, said he would have the diamonds valued and their worth paid her, that she need not fear, his son was alone to blame; that he would care for her child if she had one, and would in any case see to her needs, but that she must never again see the young prince her lover.'

It may easily be understood, since so much as this of the story became publicly known, that a good deal more lay behind, and its effect upon the unfortunate wife of Lamballe was hardly surprising. Bachaumont continues with gusto the following day: 'A young princess, lively and amiable, married last winter to a husband young also, has not been able to support tranquilly her husband's reiterated infidelities, fatal as they have been to her love for this modern Theseus. She has not been able to see without marked jealousy his absence and his errors, has conceived envy for the

despicable objects whom the prince honours with his regards, and has contracted a profound melancholy and convulsive vapours. The fashionable doctors cannot cure this more mental than physical disease, and she has placed herself in the hands of one called Pittara, a charlatan much in vogue. Many women of the court have tried him, and Madame la Duchesse de Mazarin having spoken of him to the princess, she has lately called him to attend upon her.' Pittara does not, however, seem to have done her much good; and all her life after she suffered in nerves and vitality from the cruelty, neglect, and humiliation her husband had put upon her.

La Forêt having also been disposed of, M. de Penthièvre cherished hopes that his son would at last reform his ways; but the new year, 1768, brought no improvement. Lamballe disappeared once more, and his father found him, after a long search, miserably ill and in disreputable company. His associates were paid off, and he was carried home to the castle of Luciennes, where his wife still waited for him, ready even now to love and forgive. But by this time he was beyond reclaiming. No useful purpose would be served by enumerating the sordid incidents of the months that followed: such things are best forgotten. The wretched young man sank into utter depravity; refused to remain with his relatives; wandered from excess to excess; and at last, in the beginning of May, was brought home to Luciennes by his father for the

last time—to die. He had fallen from his horse, and sustained injuries which necessitated an operation, from which his ruined constitution was too weakly to recover. His wife and sister, tender and loving women both, nursed him devotedly in so far as they were permitted, and, perhaps owing to their ministrations, his end was kinder than it might have been; but on the incidents of that deathbed it is not good to linger. On the 6th May it was announced: 'M. le Prince de Lamballe is absolutely without hope, and only lives in fever. . . . Madame la Princesse de Conti and Madame la Comtesse de la Marche are at Luciennes, and keep company with the desolate family. For the rest, the Prince makes a good end, and Father Imbert has confessed him.' He declared himself repentant at the last, received the sacrament devoutly, and after agonies of suffering, expired on Friday, the 7th May 1768, at half-past eight in the morning. It was just over fifteen months since that radiant day at Nangis, when husband and wife met and loved for the first time.

The funeral procession started from Luciennes shortly before midnight the same evening, and reached Rambouillet, where the interment took place, early next day. It consisted of three carriages with six horses each, several valets carrying torches, a hundred poor people, and a few friends of the family: neither father, widow, nor sister of the deceased being present. Probably by the Duc de Penthièvre's wish,

the official intimation of his son's death in the *Gazette de France* closed with the words: 'One cannot too highly praise the sentiments of piety and resignation and the courage which this prince has shown during his long sufferings until the close of his life. The court will take mourning for ten days in consequence of this death.' A Prince of the Blood lay dead, and sympathy for the bereaved father and widow was wide and deep. The peculiar circumstances of their trouble were well known, and the first time the Duc de Penthièvre appeared at court after his son's death, Louis XV. said to those surrounding him, 'That is the noblest man in my kingdom, and the most unhappy father.' As for the eighteen-year-old widow, all hope and happiness seemed vanished for ever from her skies. Her health had failed, her illusions were wrecked, her memories embittered. She determined to leave the world for ever, and began hasty preparations for a lifelong retirement to the Abbey of St. Antoine.

CHAPTER IV

1768-70

Only at the last moment did the Duc de Penthièvre persuade his daughter-in-law, whom he loved as his own child, to renounce her intention of taking the veil, at any rate for a time, and to remain with him. Many excellent people can give better advice to others than they will follow themselves, and though Penthièvre had himself hastened to a monastery in the days of his own great grief, he saw very well that the Princesse, hysterical, imaginative, and on the verge of melancholia, needed far more some quiet change of scene and surroundings than the long hours of morbid introspection a convent life would force upon her. He therefore gave more rein to his own grief than he would otherwise have done, implored her not to desert him in his sorrow, and spoke of his broken-hearted solitude should she still choose to go. He had indeed been the best of friends to her, and under these circumstances she could not feel it possible to leave him. She therefore promised they should remain together always, and they left Luciennes, the scene of so many sad and painful memories,

for Rambouillet, where they could steep themselves in the calm and peace of a country life.

The château of Rambouillet stood some thirty miles from Paris, in vast grounds and forest lands of its own. One learns a good deal of the life there from Florian, the favourite poet-page of Penthièvre, and later in life his secretary and friend. The Duc had customarily eight pages at a time, the four elder to travel with him, and the four younger to remain in waiting at Versailles. Florian's father had been standard-bearer to him at the battle of Fontenoy, and Florian himself was a favoured mortal, nicknamed 'Polichinelle' by the Duc. At this time he was the youngest and smallest of all the pages, being only twelve and made on a very minute scale. At first he feared the Duc would not think him handsome enough to remain in his service, but Penthièvre was ever quick to recognise talent, and as years went on little Florian became a lifelong friend to him and all his house. The boy only remained six months at Versailles, and was then sent for to be in constant attendance on the two princesses, Penthièvre's daughter and daughter-in-law.

Life at Rambouillet was very quiet indeed, and the chief amusement, delight, and occupation of the Duc was in administering to the needs of the poor on his estate. Helping him in this, the Princesse de Lamballe first regained some interest in life; and the names of both were blessed for miles around. He

was called King of the Poor, and she the Good Angel of Penthièvre. Together they went out, day after day, often disguised, on charitable missions, and more than once were seen and wondered at by trains of gay courtiers hunting with the King. For one of Penthièvre's greatest trials was that Louis XV. many years before, casting envious eyes over the glorious parks and forest glades of Rambouillet, had begged to be allowed to build a small hunting pavilion in the grounds, a request which could not very well be refused, though it was with much reluctance it was granted. Nor had the King honestly kept his word, for instead of a pavilion, a castle was built, and this château of St. Hubert, frequented often by very questionable society, was a constant annoyance to the good Duc, being within his own borders and close to his own dwelling. Still, there was no help for it, and on the whole the inhabitants of these two very different strongholds saw but little of each other.

On one occasion, however, when the King and his court had been hunting all day, by some mistake the supper ordered to be sent out from Versailles never arrived: it had been sent to another hunting castle in error. All were exceedingly hungry, and it was ten o'clock at night when somebody suggested adjourning to Rambouillet, where the Duc de Penthièvre would surely bestow some charity upon his starving monarch. The idea was promptly acted upon; but, Rambouillet reached, every salon was searched

without revealing the master, till at last the uninvited guests penetrated to the kitchen, where M. de Penthièvre was discovered in cap and apron, stirring an immense caldron from which issued a most appetising smell. Not at all taken aback, he received his visitors with the greatest hospitality, and explained that once a month he personally superintended the preparation of the meal provided daily for the poor on his estate, and that if his Majesty would deign to partake of it, he should be greatly honoured. The King and court, we read, were much struck with this practical object-lesson in charity, and virtuously sat down and ate up the paupers' dinner on the spot; whether the belated supper was given to the poor next day instead, history does not relate, but one hopes the idea occurred to somebody. It is a curious fact that when the Revolution broke over France, Rambouillet was never injured, but the notorious château de St. Hubert was one of the first to be levelled to the ground.

The Duc de Penthièvre's mother had erected a hospice for the aged poor at Rambouillet, which her son was ever at pains to maintain as she would have wished: he also built another on the same lines near his castle of Crécy, close to Dreux; and later, when he sold Crécy to the Princesse de Montmorency, he moved his poor to a third hospice at St. Just near Vernon. Each of these cost him at least 300,000 francs a year, and they were but insignificant items in

Le Château de [illegible]

the immense sum of his charities. Endowed with enormous wealth, the vast sums he gave away each year would yet be almost incredible if they were not proved by the actual accounts of 'this divine man, whose history should properly be written with the heart rather than the hand,' as one of his biographers has described him. Not content with inviting any poor person to come to his castle for relief, the Duc would sally forth every day in search of some fresh unfortunate to benefit, and would take his sad and gentle daughter-in-law with him, both of them being quite disappointed if their ambition of at least one good deed a day could not be realised. When the Duc bestowed alms, he always bent his head and murmured 'I thank you' as he gave.

It was all very charming, very ideal, and very sentimental; but, at the same time, what was then regarded as the highest virtue we might to-day look upon as injudicious, wasteful, and a perfect orgy of pauperisation. One has of course to remember that the poor of France at this period—and not only the poor, but the peasant and working classes also—were in an absolutely helpless position as regards self-respect and any attempt at independence. There was no state organisation or institutions for their relief; they were wholly at the mercy of the master of that estate upon which they chanced to be born; and that few were so kind and thoughtful as M. de Penthièvre, the vast vengeance of the French Revolu-

tion will bear witness. A few handfuls of gold, however generously scattered over a few acres of France, were not sufficient to stem that fearful storm; but it was all that individuals could do, and at Rambouillet it was nobly done indeed.

Incidentally, and as a recreation, the Duc collected clocks and watches, and took them about with him wherever he travelled. Usually they were hung up in an open pavilion in his garden by the river, but he never feared they would be stolen, and they never were. He does not appear to have been a very expert watchmaker, for he could never make them all keep time together, till once when Florian, bursting suddenly into a room where he sat before them spread on a bench, clumsily fell over the bench, and scattered the precious objects on the floor. In an agony he began to apologise, but the Duc stopped him good naturedly with a 'Well, well, at least you have accomplished what I never could—they are all going at once now!'

Very shortly after the death of the Prince de Lamballe, the Duc de Chartres proposed marriage to Mademoiselle de Bourbon-Penthièvre. The move was an expected one, but the Duc de Penthièvre appears to have returned an evasive answer at first. Aware, however, that his only child was now of marriageable age, an heiress, and likely to be much sought after, he determined that it was time for her to leave her convent, and sent for her to return

home. There was a tearful parting between her and Mademoiselle de Montigny, who later became the Baronne de Talleyrand. Both realised that marriages would shortly be arranged for them, and vowed a parting vow that their eldest daughters should be named Eugénie and Adélaïde respectively after one another, an idea that seems to have brought much consolation to their sad little hearts. Madame de Lamballe was sincerely glad of the society of her young sister-in-law, of whom during all her life she remained very fond, and her health and spirits grew rapidly better and more serene. Indeed, a quiet and country life was always the best for her, and a few months of the town generally exhausted and tired her out. The Duc de Penthièvre, however, did not wish her to be absent for ever from court, and he sold a house he had at Puteaux and bought one at Passy, in order that his two young 'daughters' might be within reach of gaiety if they desired it, while at the same time a moderate seclusion could always be theirs.

The Court of France was for the moment of a very different character from what it had been the previous year. Queen Maria Leczinska died in June 1768. She had never, it is true, possessed much influence with the King or court, being a sad and melancholy lady, who carried with her everywhere a skull, supposed to be that of Ninon de l'Enclos, which she treated as a favourite toy, and addressed always as

'La Mignonne.' Her death, however, following not very long on that of his only son and daughter-in-law, plunged Louis XV. suddenly into incontrollable grief and remorse, and all those about the court pulled long faces, wore heavy mourning, sighed, and sung psalms. Madame Adélaïde, the King's eldest daughter, a clever woman of thirty-six, perfectly realised that this mood of her father's would not last for long. The alternative was a new wife or another Madame de Pompadour, and of the two the former was immeasurably to be preferred; so she cast about for a suitable object, young, pretty, and not too influential, that the King might be absorbed in her charms, and leave all politics to Adélaïde herself. She found, as she thought, the very person needful in the Princesse de Lamballe. The King had always admired the Princesse, and was perfectly prepared to be attracted by her; the tinge of melancholy in her youth and gentleness pleased his present mood; the de Noailles family (relatives of the late Duchesse de Penthièvre) were greatly in favour of the match; and for a time it really seemed hopeful of accomplishment. But the jaded fancy of the satyr King needed a constant and energetic attention; where he loved again the lady must at least do the best part of the wooing; and this *rôle* pride, race, native refinement, and her own instincts forbade the Princesse to accept. She was perfectly courteous to the 'well-beloved' monarch when in his presence, but would go no step

further; not ambitious for place and already disillusioned with the glitter of life, she shrank rather from all public appearances that were not absolutely necessary, and it is indeed doubtful if she ever realised that she might, if she chose, become Queen of France. The Duc de Penthièvre did not encourage the idea, and the Duc de Choiseul worked steadily against it. A counter attempt was made to arrange an alliance between the King and the Archduchess Elizabeth, daughter of the Empress Maria Theresa, but this also fell through; and eventually Louis became acquainted with Mlle. Lange, who had no scruples about attracting him and exploiting his affection. His infatuation for her grew apace; she became Comtesse Dubarry, and all hopes of a respectable court passed for the remainder of his reign. The Penthièvre family stayed aloof and in the country as much as possible.

First, however, the object of their return to court was accomplished in the presentation of Mademoiselle de Bourbon-Penthièvre. The King of Denmark visited France in November, and grand fêtes were given for his entertainment by all the chief nobles; among others, one by the Duc de Penthièvre at the Hôtel de Toulouse, and one by the Duc d'Orléans at the Palais Royal. In these Mademoiselle of course took part, but she was not actually presented till the 7th December, by the Comtesse de la Marche, the Princesse de Lamballe's mourning being still too deep for her to perform this office. The following day the debutante

was baptized under the names of Louise Marie Adélaïde, by the Archbishop of Rheims, Grand Almoner of France, the Dauphin and Madame Adélaïde standing sponsors, and the King and court being present. This supplementary ceremony was, it seems, quite customary for young people of good family on their first appearance at court, the baptism at birth being strictly private. Mademoiselle de Bourbon-Penthièvre is described as very pretty, very light-hearted, and very fond of pretty clothes, gaiety, amusement, and getting her own way. The poor child was not, however, destined to a particularly radiant life. The question of her marriage with the Duc de Chartres was soon raised again, and the Baronne d'Oberkirch has given us some account of the transaction, which is probably very fairly correct. The Abbé de Breteuil, chancellor to the Duc d'Orléans, she says, first suggested the idea of the marriage before the death of the Prince de Lamballe; but as co-heiress only, Orléans did not consider Mademoiselle's dowry would be sufficient for the honour of alliance with his house. Penthièvre, as descended from Madame de Montespan, bore of course the bar sinister, while Orléans was a younger branch of the royal family of France itself; and indeed at this time the Duc de Chartres stood actually fifth in the succession to the crown, only his father and the three grandsons of the King, still unmarried, ranking before him. When M. de Lamballe was known to be

gravely ill, the Abbé de Breteuil again put forward his suggestion, and this time the Duc d'Orléans thought better of it, and asked the Duc de Choiseul to act for him in the matter. The Prince de Condé also at this time wished to obtain the hand of Mademoiselle for his own son, and asked Choiseul's intervention, but his good offices were already bespoken. The Duc de Penthièvre did not jump very eagerly at the offer, for he was not particularly fond of Chartres; however, the alliance would be an important one, and he finally agreed, but would only promise his daughter fifty thousand crowns a year, since his son still lived, and he at least had not given up all hopes of his recovery. Orléans was indignant at the smallness of the sum, and promptly withdrew his offer; Penthièvre was furious at the insult, Choiseul angry at being mixed up in the affair, Condé hopeful for his own claims. Shortly after this the Prince de Lamballe died, and Orléans again made overtures. Still deeply offended, it is doubtful if the Duc de Penthièvre would have listened to the suit, had it not received an unexpected championship from Mademoiselle herself. She had once met the Duc de Chartres at the house of a relative, and he had given her his arm to her carriage; no doubt his fascinating manners and his royal blood seemed to her romantic soul eminently desirable, and she had dreamed of him ever since. She was wilful, pretty, young, and her father's only child; so she obtained her wish, and the

Duc de Penthièvre at last consented to ask the King's permission for the marriage.

Certainly, though in the light of later events we know more of his character to-day, it is plain that Chartres must have been a very engaging rascal. The Princesse de Lamballe, who cared little ever for men's society, and had besides small cause for interest in him, yet liked him so well that many a time she intervened to spare him royal displeasure in days when he was anything but popular at court. Marie Antoinette, in her early days in France, in spite of being warned against him, enjoyed his society, and accepted innocently his sinister compliments until such time as the storm threatened, and she found division all too clear between her true friends and foes. Louis XV., however, hated all the Orléans family, and brought up his grandsons to believe that Chartres or his father would stop at nothing to secure the throne, to which they held reversionary rights; this feeling was implanted especially strongly in the eldest of them, who disliked and distrusted Chartres all his life with, as the sequel showed, but too good a cause. The old King would not, however, actually refuse permission when the Duc de Penthièvre asked his consent, although he held very strong feelings against it. 'I cannot be pleased,' he said, 'that a prince of our younger branch should become richer than my own grandchildren; very awkward complications might arise from it. But since the throne is

secured in the direct line through my three grandsons, I will not oppose the desired alliance. Only, mark my words, your daughter will not be happy.' Penthièvre sighed, thinking this very probable, but Mademoiselle was radiant and determined, and so the negotiations proceeded.

Louis announced the marriage to his court early in January 1769, but there were further delays; Chartres, having satisfactorily settled his future, being a little loth to resign his liberty; and the wedding did not actually take place till the 5th April at Versailles. It was a very great affair, the King himself being present at the very select royal banquet in the evening. Only twenty-one covers were laid, and we are told that twelve of these were for young princelings in the very flower of their age. The new Duchesse de Chartres was much fêted by all her relatives and the great nobles of the court; the Prince de Condé, her uncle, gave a grand entertainment in especial for her at his country house at Issy. The Duc de Lauzun was a great friend of the Duc de Chartres, but was not present at his wedding, being absent at the time in Corsica, else we might have had some curious details of the occasion. At the recent marriage of a friend, the Comte de Fitz-James, Chartres had given what he called a *Souper des Veuves* the night before, at which all the ladies present appeared—with some reason—in widow's garb; and it is said that the first time after his own

marriage that he and the young Duchesse appeared in public at one of the opera balls, certain women again made ostentatious figures in heavy black. 'However, they had not long to wait,' remarks cynical Lauzun.

As to the good Duc de Penthièvre, 'My daughter has passed into another house,' said he, 'but my poor daughter-in-law has come to replace her beneath my roof,' and as a child of his own indeed he treated her. Together they went back to Rambouillet, travelled on his various estates, visited their relatives, and lived a calm, peaceful, and happy life, chiefly occupied with the doing of good to others.

CHAPTER V

1770-4

PERHAPS stirred to it by this Orléans wedding, which he so much disliked, the King now considered it high time to look about for wives for his own grandsons. In 1770 Louis the Dauphin was sixteen; shy, awkward, ill-mannered, but still the heir to France; and a bride was found him in a daughter of the imperious Maria Theresa, Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary. The Austrian alliance was welcomed by some and hated by others, but it was for the Austrian alliance alone that the match was made, the person of the bride herself counting for very little. She was, as a matter of fact, an eager, thin, ill-educated, immature child of fourteen, 'a little red-haired thing,' the hitherto triumphant Dubarry termed her; and at first it seemed as if her coming could make little possible difference at the court of France. For herself, no doubt, freedom from the stern rule of her Empress-Mother meant no small thing, and to be first lady of a kingdom counted for still more; but so far she looked upon all these matters with the eyes of a child. Scarcely pretty,

yet with irregular features and the Hapsburg mouth, she still brought with her a sense of youth and joyous freshness which must have been very pleasant to an atmosphere musty with ancient scandals and stale with worn-out intrigues. In the whole course of history there is perhaps no individual character which so completely develops before our very eyes as that of Marie Antoinette; and if one were not able so closely to follow her every step in the long ladder of her schooling, it would be almost impossible to recognise in the worn, red-eyed widow of 1793 the eager, ignorant, bright-eyed child of 1770.

So important a wedding in the royal family implied many changes at court; and most of the ancient nobility, which had of late somewhat effaced itself from the royal orgies and retired to its several estates, became now anxious once more to claim its every privilege. Hundreds of magnificent presents rained in upon the future Dauphiness from every one of position in the kingdom, and that sent by the Princesse de Lamballe may still be seen in the private apartments at Versailles: a handsome clock, upheld by allegorical figures representing love, fertility, and fecundity. Many were the fêtes and entertainments devised in honour of the coming bride, and surely never was princess made more enthusiastically welcome among the people of her adoption than she to whom that people were ultimately to assign a cruel and shameful death. The

actual marriage took place by proxy at Vienna on May 16th, and immediately afterwards the Dauphiness set off for France, where she was welcomed by the King and her unknown husband at the bridge of Berné, just beyond Compiègne. Tradition has it that Louis XV., who still cherished a profound admiration for the young Princesse de Lamballe, himself presented her to her future queen and friend at the foot of the great stairs at Compiègne; and though the incident is not authentic, it may quite possibly have happened so. The more formal record tells that it was not till the Dauphiness had reached her private apartments that the King introduced to her the Duc d'Orléans, the Duc and Duchesse de Chartres, the Duc and Duchesse de Bourbon, the Comte and Comtesse de la Marche, the Duc de Penthièvre, and the Princesse de Lamballe, 'when those who were privileged by their blood to kiss the Dauphiness had that honour.' Marie Antoinette, we are told, was at once attracted to the Princesse, but she, whose emotions were not now to be so quickly roused, gracefully withdrew from publicity as soon as she was able.

The quarrels over precedence at the Lamballe wedding were but a faint foreshadowing of the bitter feuds that raged around the same subject during the festivities attending the royal marriage. Chiefly, anger was aroused by the Comtesse de Brionne (a very ambitious woman, by birth a de Rohan Roche-

fort), who had persuaded the King to give precedence to her daughter, Mdlle. de Lorraine, over all the other young ladies of the court. Several other families, considering themselves equally noble, indignantly refused to attend any entertainment where this arrangement was to be allowed; and at a great ball, commanded by the King and given by the Duc de Duras, Madame du Deffand says that at five o'clock, when dancing was supposed to begin, only three dancers were in the room, the Princesse de Bouillon and Mdlles. de Lorraine and de Rohan; while it was evident that nobody else intended to arrive. The King sent urgent messages to several other invited guests, and this being a command they could not well ignore, by seven o'clock eight or nine more appeared, sufficient for minuets; after which and supper, country dances were enjoyed till ten, when a display of fireworks and illuminations were given: these, however, were damp and smoky, and not a success. The exact order of precedence for the royal minuets at these marriage festivities was the Dauphin and Dauphiness, the Comte de Provence and Madame Adélaïde, the Comte d'Artois and the Duchesse de Chartres, the Duc de Chartres and the Duchesse de Bourbon (his sister), the Prince de Condé and the Princesse de Lamballe, the Duc de Bourbon and Mdlle. de Lorraine.

The child Dauphiness was queen of the hour, and where her favours fell, honour was accounted indeed.

No doubt the Princesse de Lamballe felt pleased at the gracious advances made her, but she was still too dispirited to care to pursue any advantage: she had lost her grip on life for the time, and nothing seemed worth troubling herself about. As soon as possible she and her father-in-law left the court, and returned to the seclusion of Rambouillet.

In September the Duc de Penthièvre took his daughter and daughter-in-law to Havre de Grâce for a change: the Duc de Chartres paid them flying visits here, but his marital duties already sat lightly upon him, and 'urgent business' invariably called him away very soon. Later on, we hear that M. de Penthièvre had an attack of illness at his castle of Crécy, and was devotedly nursed by Mesdames de Chartres and de Lamballe. The call of the great world was beginning, however, to sound more loudly in the ears of the young Princesse; and at twenty, with position, beauty, wealth, and a sweet disposition, it would have been unnatural indeed if the love of life had not awakened in time to the wooings of the kind and gracious friendship offered her. The first exuberance of girlhood was gone, and the love so cruelly slain in her never bloomed more; but the romance of her life was destined to lie in friendship, and these were its opening days.

Some account of the chief persons in the household of the Dauphiness will be necessary here. Madame de Noailles, a relative of the late Duchesse

de Penthièvre, had been appointed her First Lady of Honour, and to her fell the duty of selecting the principal associates of the Dauphiness, giving balls and parties in her honour, and inviting to them only those whom she considered suitable friends for a future queen. So strict and strait-laced were Madame de Noailles' notions in many respects that the impatient princess nicknamed her 'Madame Étiquette,' the first of many witty *bons mots* for which poor Marie Antoinette was afterwards famed and hated. She was most injudiciously encouraged in her childish dislike for rule and routine by the Abbé de Vermond, her secretary, who had been sent to Vienna to instruct her in the French language directly her marriage with the Dauphin was arranged, and who remained in her most intimate confidence for many years after she came to France. No doubt the Abbé was a very worthy man, and in his way honestly devoted to her interests, but he also had an axe to grind, and merely proved how impossible it is for those in high places to put implicit trust in any one about them. Endless squabbles between him and the *entourage* of the court compelled periodical retirements on his part, but always he returned to the charge until, with the first blow struck against the monarchy, he and certain other hated adherents of Marie Antoinette were forced for her own sake to leave her. The third and most important person to whom the Dauphiness might turn

for counsel and advice in her strange and novel position was the Comte de Mercy-Argenteau, Austrian ambassador at the French court; and it is from his minute correspondence with the Empress Maria Theresa concerning her daughter—correspondence dealing with her friends, her appearance, her clothing, her manners, her personal cleanliness, and even her relations with her husband—that our chief knowledge of the first years of Marie Antoinette in France are drawn. Mercy was almost a spy upon the poor child, and no minutest incident or inclination on her part escaped him; all were written straight off to Vienna, and in time somewhat sarcastically commented upon by the Empress herself to her daughter, a form of chiding which Marie Antoinette seems to have accepted in a most meek and filial spirit. But in truth there was perhaps no more lonely woman in France than the envied Dauphiness, surrounded by political parties which she scarcely understood, but which nevertheless waited breathlessly to pounce upon her slightest indiscretion; her natural impulses thwarted; her husband's aunts on the watch for 'presumption,' and angered if she favoured any noble with whom they disagreed; above all, seeing little and understanding nothing of her young husband, who seemed—probably from shyness—actually to avoid her presence. The Austrian alliance had been mainly engineered by the Duc de Choiseul, and six months after it had

crowned his long influence in the Council, Madame Dubarry and her party procured his dismissal, thus withdrawing another friend and counsellor from the young Dauphiness. More, Choiseul's enemies endeavoured to agitate for a divorce, hoping to send the Austrian princess back to her own country; and perhaps, if she had not quite charmed the heart of the old King, this nefarious plan might have succeeded; but Louis XV. would not permit it.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Dauphiness had real need of a good and intimate friend, though both Mercy and her mother did their best to keep her from forming any such attachment, fearing the immense influence the object of her favour must necessarily hold. But Marie Antoinette was at an age when love and confidence were a hunger with her, and more particularly from her own sex. Though mortified by her husband's seeming neglect, she did not really long greatly yet for a man's love; but a girl friend she had never been allowed at Vienna, and the first exercise of her personal liberty must be to make one.

Checked at first in her attraction to the Princesse de Lamballe, she turned her smiles upon the Duchesse de Picquiny, the youngest lady at court, a clever and rather sarcastic caricaturist and a very amusing companion. For some weeks the two were inseparable, and then Madame de Picquiny's influence waned; and in turn Madame de Saint-Mégrim,

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Madame de Cossé, the Marquise de Langeac, and many others basked in periods of favour from the capricious, imperious, but really warm-hearted young princess. None of these lasted for very long, however, and during the winter after the marriage the Princesse de Lamballe was frequently invited by Madame de Noailles to the select little Wednesday balls given in her apartments for Marie Antoinette, where once again the Dauphiness pressed her friendship upon the gentle and charming widow, and this time the attraction seems to have been mutual.

Madame de Lamballe began to find pleasure once more in life and movement. In February 1771 the Prince-Royal of Sweden and his brother Adolphe visited the court of France; and among other entertainments attended a great reception at the Hôtel de Toulouse held by the Duc de Penthièvre and his daughter-in-law. Later, the Princesse again assisted the Duc in entertaining another royal guest, the King of Denmark. She became, too, a frequent attendant at court, and a still more frequent companion to Marie Antoinette through her quieter hours, in her garden and her private apartments. Long afterwards, when evil days had fallen upon both, the sad-eyed Queen wrote to this most faithful of her friends: 'How happy was that time, dear heart, when we read, chatted, and walked together without being disturbed by the mob!' The rapid growth of so warm a liking was naturally not lost upon the vigilant Mercy, and early

in March 1771 he wrote to Maria Theresa: 'For some time past the Dauphiness has shown a great affection for the Princesse de Lamballe. . . . This young princess is sweet and amiable, and enjoying the privileges of a Princess of the Blood Royal, is in a position to avail herself of her Royal Highness's favour.' The Empress does not seem to have been best pleased, knowing too much of the history of court favouritism to wish her daughter any intimate friends; but certainly, if one had become a necessity to her, the choice could not have fallen upon a better person.

Though all her life subject to fits of great nervous depression, the Princesse seems at this time to have regained much of the gaiety and light spirits natural to her youth; and her semi-royal birth, noble lineage, and upright principles rendered her an excellent and charming companion for the volatile little Dauphiness. Marie Antoinette would not be content to let her friend remain a widow, and almost her first care was to seek a suitable husband for her. The pushing Comtesse de Brionne suggested her son, the Prince de Lambesc, and at first sight the choice seemed peculiarly fitting, since Madame de Brionne's elder daughter was already married to Prince Victor Carignan, the eldest brother of Madame de Lamballe. Marie Antoinette enthusiastically promised her support, and Mercy was obliged to point out to her that it would be a disastrous thing for the

Princesse's position if the marriage took place, since she would lose all her royal privileges by it, and the Dauphiness herself would be unable to see her in the confidential intimacy she now enjoyed. The project was therefore dropped, and the Princesse herself does not seem to have felt the slightest interest in it one way or another.

On Holy Thursday of this year Madame de Lamballe is mentioned as being present at High Mass in the Royal Chapel; and in May she accompanied the court to Fontainebleau to assist in receiving a new royal bride, the Comtesse de Provence. Disappointed at having rendered the succession no more secure by the Dauphin's marriage, Louis xv. determined that his next grandson, M. de Provence, must wed also, and for his wife was chosen a grand-daughter of the King of Sardinia, first cousin once removed to the Princesse de Lamballe. The marriage was as usual celebrated by proxy, and Madame de Provence, a plain, conceited girl with 'tolerably fine eyes,' met her husband and his family first at Fontainebleau, where no doubt Madame de Lamballe, the only relation and old friend present, was peculiarly welcome to her. Many were the receptions given and the entertainments devised in her honour; but the strangest of them all was a *fête champêtre* given by the Duchesse de Mazarin at her house on the Quai Malaquais.

This Duchesse was well known to the society of the

period, and it was said of her that she had been endowed at birth with the three fairy gifts of wealth, duty, and ill-luck. Kind-hearted, very stout, and possessing some of the finest jewels in France, they yet never showed to advantage on her rotund little figure: and however good her intentions were, something always contrived to interfere with them. Did she give a supper-party, her best dishes failed her: a ball, her chief guests were prevented from coming: an invitation, her servants fell ill: a surprise party, and nothing would work as she had intended. In short, the wonder was that she continued to entertain as indefatigably as ever, and constantly to devise new amusements, none of which proved ever a success. For instance, one day at table she had a huge pie brought in, from which, when opened, a hundred living birds flew out. She had intended them to burst into song and charm her guests; but instead, startled at the noise and sudden light, they flew straight for the most sheltered places they could see—the ladies' headdresses; and hardly a woman present but had some five or six of them nestled in the huge puffs and curls of her coiffure. It may be imagined if they were grateful to the Duchesse for the originality of this idea! Her entertainment for the Comtesse de Provence was, however, still more amazing. The fête was given in two huge salons, divided from each other by a thin sheet of plate glass: in the one room sat the guests, and in the other was arranged a minia-

ture valley, with trees, flowers, winding paths, and splashing waterfalls. The scene must have been very pretty, until the grand climax arrived: two shepherdesses and a dog drove a flock of sheep and a heifer across the vale; but the clapping from the other room startled the heifer, which made a dash for the plate glass, smashed it, and rushed in among the guests, followed by the dog and the whole flock of sheep. The confusion that ensued passes description: all the ladies were on chairs in the twinkling of an eye; the Princesse de Lamballe seems to have been the most agile of all, for she climbed on to the high mantel-shelf, 'shrieking,' says disrespectful Lauzun, 'like a peacock'; the royal bride fell into hysterics; and it seemed as if pandemonium was let loose. At last a door was discovered at the back of the salon, and the affrighted guests escaped and hurried down to supper, only to learn that in the alarm the chief part of the supper had been upset on the stairs, and there was nothing to eat. This entertainment cost 80,000 livres, about £3200.

In spite of her returning gaiety, the Princesse de Lamballe still devoted much of her time to the Duc de Penthièvre and to her friend and sister-in-law, the Duchesse de Chartres. The summer had been very quietly spent by Madame de Chartres, in the joyful hope of shortly becoming mother to a prince of the house of Orléans: her husband was for the time being quite devoted to her, and all prospects seemed

particularly happy, when on the 10th October she had the great disappointment of giving birth to a dead child. The catastrophe was thought to have been brought about by her father-in-law insisting that she should go hunting with him very shortly before her confinement; but her health remained delicate for some time after, and the two following summers she went to Forges to take the waters; and at last, on the 6th October 1773, to her great joy, her eldest son, the Duc de Valois, afterwards King Louis Philippe, was born. She was a curious blend, this little Duchesse, of the strongest maternal affections, and a longing to be in the forefront of fashion. Her head-dress must always be a little larger, her coiffure more exaggerated, her costume more pronounced, than those of any other lady at the court; and with it all, her heart was so good and tender, and her nature really so simple, that she was loved by all; and long afterwards, when her husband became the most dangerous enemy of the royal House of France, Louis XVI. and his Queen both begged her to understand that their disfavour had never extended and never could extend to herself.

The Dauphin and Dauphiness and M. and Madame de Provence now managed to form a pleasant circle among themselves and the intimate friends of their own age with whom they delighted to associate; the Princesse de Lamballe having from the first been regarded by Marie Antoinette as a

relative, and being now almost inseparable from her side. In the winter there were sleigh drives, with merry supper-parties after; in the summer the young people got up little plays, very, very privately, and amused themselves immensely by learning and reciting parts before the Dauphin, the sole audience permitted to witness these entertainments, as nothing would induce him to act himself. M. de Provence was always letter perfect; he was the learned young man, sometimes regarded as the prig, of the royal family; M. d'Artois, gay and fascinating, the 'Prince of Youth,' was not so correct, but threw more fire into his acting; the ladies were all and invariably bad. The Dauphin laughed very much at anything comical, but tragedy and sentiment bored him profoundly. The little circle received another member in November 1773, when the Comte d'Artois married the younger sister of the Comtesse de Provence, second of the little Sardinian cousins whom their grandfather had, at Madame de Lamballe's wedding-feast, so devoutly hoped she would some day see well married to good French husbands. This princess was very small and ill-shaped, almost deformed; her nose was long, and she was not distinguished in any sense; but her heart was kind and her complexion good, and she very soon made many friends, and was welcomed as one of themselves by the Dauphiness and her *coterie*.

It was perhaps unwise, if very natural, that the

younger generation should thus dissociate itself, in aims and amusements, from the elder ; but Mesdames the King's daughters were only too ready to be hurt : the removal of the centre of card-playing from Madame Adélaïde's rooms to those of the Dauphiness, though quite correct according to etiquette, gave great offence, and the idea of secret meetings and games still more. Madame Louise, the youngest of the princesses, had already retired to a convent, but there were still three of these ladies to conciliate. Nor was Marie Antoinette discreet in her dealings with the Dauphin's sisters, though these were not yet old enough to take part in society, and were still continuing their education. She insisted on slighting Clothilde, the elder, a fat, lethargic, kind-hearted girl, because her attendants flattered her ; and spoiled little Elizabeth, at that time a thin, peevish, and delicate child. There were clashings of criticism, too, concerning the Dauphiness's own education ; and though, since for the time she was the rising star, it did not seem as if criticism could injure her, ill-will and spite were already storing up vials to descend some day, not only upon the head of Marie Antoinette, but also upon that of the most devoted of her friends.

CHAPTER VI

1774

In the history of every friendship may be read a rise, a climax, and a decline. In most cases the friendship after drifts to a natural end; in some all this is but the merest prelude to the love that is stronger than neglect, despair, and death.

1774 was perhaps the happiest year in the whole life of the Princesse de Lamballe. She had surmounted her first reluctance once more to open her heart to any human being; she had found a real glow of pleasant warmth in the genuine affection between herself and the Dauphiness, and her love was henceforth true, tender, and lasting, if never so demonstrative as that of Marie Antoinette. It was, as has before been said, the age of great friendships: girls, and even grown women, carried the miniature of another woman about them in a locket, bracelet, or other ornament, would draw it out occasionally when in company, gaze fondly upon it and press it to their lips; wrote long and loverlike letters to the beloved object, awaited her coming ardently, and wept storms of tears at her departure. The little Dauphiness took

the disease badly; the Princesse de Lamballe more calmly, but her very serenity added to her charm. The Dauphiness would go nowhere without her. We find her name at every court festivity, every state function; she was present at the gala performance of Gluck's *Iphigenia*, a brilliant and enthusiastic spectacle, and it became obvious that there was no surer way to please Marie Antoinette than to offer some honour to the Princesse de Lamballe.

Suddenly, in May, the whole court was thrown into consternation: the old King had taken smallpox in its most virulent form. The treatment for smallpox was not very well understood in those days, and Louis XV. was a bad subject for any disease; there was not, from the beginning, the least hope that he could recover. On the 10th May he died, and Louis and Marie Antoinette, boy and girl of twenty and eighteen, were King and Queen of France. The Comtesse de Noailles brought them the news, and they both fell on their knees together where they stood, and cried with tears: 'O God! help and protect us! We are indeed too young to reign.'

Mesdames, the new King's aunts, had nobly nursed their father through his very trying and dangerous illness, the result being that they contracted the disease themselves, but ultimately recovered. In fear lest the three young royal couples of the next generation might do the same, they were promptly

hurried into quarantine by the doctor's advice, and the King and his two brothers were inoculated. This and the court mourning kept them very quiet for a time, and the Queen began to see more of her husband, between whom and herself a feeling of greater liking and sympathy sprang up. It was as well Marie Antoinette had this consolation and interest, since, for the moment, she was separated from her friend. The Duchesse de Chartres, who had for long been in very poor health, fell into so great an agitation at the news of the King's tragic death that her sister-in-law carried her away early in June to rest quietly in the society of her father.

Meanwhile, the new court at Versailles was rapidly settling itself upon very different lines from the old. The aunts recovered from their smallpox; mourning diminished; and all those who had slighted Marie Antoinette in the days when it seemed possible she might be sent back to Austria, now became humbly apologetic, and, viewing in her the power of the moment, cringed for forgiveness and favour. To all these her answer was noble and reassuring —'The Queen does not avenge the Dauphiness.' Nevertheless, it was but natural that her first wish should be to find some post of special honour for her dearest friend; and since the influence of the Queen's friend promised to become even more important than that of the friend of the Dauphiness,

the ever-watchful Mercy was quick to note which way the wind blew. 'Her Majesty continually sees the Princesse de Lamballe in her rooms,' he had written to the Empress early in June, the very day after the Princesse had left the court with her sister-in-law; and he adds: 'This lady joins to much sweetness a very sincere character, far from intrigue and all such worries. The Queen has conceived for some time a real friendship for this young Princess, and the choice is excellent, for although a Piedmontese, Madame de Lamballe is not at all identified with the interests of Mesdames de Provence and d'Artois. All the same, I have taken the precaution to point out to the Queen that her favour and goodness to the Princesse de Lamballe are somewhat excessive, in order to prevent abuse of them from that quarter.'

To Mercy it seemed impossible that royal favour should ever be sought without some ulterior object, and Maria Theresa was still more sceptical. Moreover, the two Italian princesses married to the two next heirs, and her own daughter being still childless, rendered the Empress uneasy and distrustful; and she replied to her faithful ambassador a week later that, 'In spite of all the good qualities that the Princesse de Lamballe possesses, her Piedmont birth must always warn my daughter to limit her confidence in her. I fear greatly the Piedmont party may gain much steady influence in the French court.'

The young King Louis XVI., however, so far as his opinion appeared upon the surface at all, seemed pleased at his wife's choice of a friend; and Weber, the Queen's foster-brother, who had followed in her service from Vienna, reports that, meeting her one day in a passage, Louis said abruptly: 'I am delighted to see that Madame de Lamballe is constantly with you: are you then very fond of her?' To which, with smiles and tears, Marie Antoinette replied, 'Ah, sire, the Princesse de Lamballe's friendship is the charm of my life.'

At times, indeed, during her whole life, the Queen chose for the moment very erratic friends; she had a craving to be loved, to inspire interest apart from her rank; and in her position such sentiments were very hard to win. But the year before, for instance, she had taken a sudden liking for a young actress, Mdlle. Rancourt, which fancy gave violent offence to the Marquise de Langeac, her last favourite, who wept and raved of inconstancy, to all of which hysterics Marie Antoinette remained quite indifferent. Her fancy for the Rancourt passed swiftly enough, and all these women stood in a totally different relation to her from the Princesse de Lamballe, who, by birth, nature, and disposition, was more fitted to be her real intimate. Of all the many friends with which his wife surrounded herself during his reign, too, there was no question which Louis the King liked best. Most of them

bored when they did not actively annoy him, but the Princesse de Lamballe was always and to the end his *très chère cousine*, and this no empty form of words.

Casting about for some means by which to do unusual honour to her friend, the Queen discovered that some thirty years before, the office of Superintendent of the Household to the Queen had been held by Mdlle. de Clermont, daughter of the Duc de Bourbon, but since her death the post had been allowed to lapse. This seemed the very thing she wanted, and she eagerly demanded it for her friend. But jealousies were already floating about the name of Lamballe, and at this suggestion they crystallised into a determined and universal opposition. Objections to the plan arose from all sides. The post was an unnecessary one and a great expense to the nation; the power it bestowed was too great to vest in the hands of one woman; it had been allowed to lapse for very good reasons, and it would be absurd to revive it now. The powers of such a superintendent were indeed immense. No order in the palace could be carried out without her permission, not even if given by the Queen herself; she had complete authority over all the Queen's ladies, and took precedence even of the Lady of Honour, a prospect which did not at all please the Comtesse de Noailles, 'Madame Étiquette,' who at present held the unique position of chief lady to

Her Majesty. Madame de Noailles had been very kind to the Princesse de Lamballe, and was, moreover, related to her husband's family; it would not therefore be right or wise to insult her by placing so young a lady over her head. Turgot, the Minister of Finance, also strongly opposed the plan on the ground of expense, and at last the Queen was obliged for the time to let it drop. Mercy had plainly been anxious about the matter, and one can almost hear the sigh of relief with which he wrote to his Empress in the end of September that 'there has been much jealousy about the Princesse de Lamballe, but she is now soon going to Brittany. The Queen may have made use of her, but she has not been able to make use of the Queen.'

This expedition to Brittany, the first service the Princesse and her father-in-law were to render their new sovereigns, was a somewhat onerous and difficult task. There had been disturbances in the province, the States were to be held there during the winter, and the King, unable to preside over them himself, sent for the Duc de Penthièvre, for whom he had the greatest reverence and admiration, and implored him on this occasion to represent the majesty of France. The Duc had lived much in retirement of late, and did not greatly care for the responsibility, but he saw its necessity, set his own feelings aside, and accepted the post. 'Make me loved!' was the rather pathetic adjuration of the young King, to

which the Duc promised his best endeavours; and indeed, for a monarch of twenty, hitherto always considered shy, backward, and set in the shade by his younger brothers, Louis deserves much praise for the opening actions of his reign and the manner in which they were performed. Had his kind heart and strong common sense only not lacked decision of character, history might have written a different chapter for France, but all this was yet to be evolved.

The Duc de Penthièvre and the Princesse de Lamballe set out for Brittany on the 14th December, and reached Rennes three days later, making a quiet and incognito entrance into the town. On Tuesday the 20th the Duc opened the States. Both he and his charming daughter-in-law had a most enthusiastic reception, and if there had been disaffection before, they certainly left none behind them: the visit was an unqualified success, and lasted the better part of two months. During this time open house was kept, and very lavishly: the leavings from table alone, it was said, were sufficient to feed four hundred poor people. Madame de Lamballe went about the town on foot, even through the snow, visiting the churches and the people, and noting down the names of poor children who might be eligible for St. Cyr. The only possible *contretemps* occurred in connection with a musical piece entitled 'The Coronation of a King,' written by a barrister of Rennes, and per-

formed in State for the first time before the Duc and his suite. With incredible tactlessness and ill-taste, the author, in praising Louis XVI., had thought fit to cast ridicule upon his predecessor; and Penthièvre, who had known and served the old king in his prime, was most indignant at such baseness. His first desire was to punish the unhappy poet, but anxious to leave no unpleasant memories of his visit, he contented himself with forbidding any further representations. Early in January a deputation of Bretons waited upon the Duc to implore him to be their Lieutenant-General in Chief, and to accept 100,000 livres as a mark of their affection and regard, together with a beautiful diamond ornament for the Princesse de Lamballe; but he declined all, exclaiming, 'I ask no honours; I ask your hearts.' And, 'They are yours!' cried the enthusiastic Bretons.

Meanwhile Marie Antoinette had not forgotten her friend. Letters flew from Versailles to Rennes, and the Queen was still privately agitating for the appointment she desired. In the end of December she wrote: 'I need not tell you, my dear Lamballe, of the pleasure I have had in receiving news of you. . . . You go out every day among your Bretons; you trample on etiquette; you live for distributing alms. What a life of happiness! How I envy you, my darling friend; I who am chained up in my Versailles, bound by every kind of etiquette and formality; and still worse, am far from you. I

would tell you to come back quickly, if you were not so busy doing good. Adieu, my dear heart! I love you and embrace you with all my soul. Marie Antoinette.'

When at last the visit to Brittany was drawing to a close, the Queen implored her friend to return at once, even before the Duc de Penthièvre, since she could not endure another day without her company. Nor was she to pause an instant on reaching Versailles, even to change her dress, but to hasten immediately to the Queen's apartments. The wish was obeyed; and on entering the Queen's favourite room, the Princesse, to her surprise, perceived herself reflected in the great mirror opposite in a different costume from that she was then wearing. Marie Antoinette had had her friend's picture painted on the looking-glass, in order that she might deceive herself, and looking up suddenly, imagine the Princesse to be upon the threshold of her room. But now the Princesse herself stood there, and in another moment the friends were in one another's arms.

CHAPTER VII

1775

SINCE the new reign, Madame de Noailles' quiet little parties had been given up, and the Queen now gave her own balls, and invited all who cared to come. It was to a very gay and lively court that the Princesse de Lamballe returned in the early February of 1775. The Archduke Maximilien, brother of Marie Antoinette, arrived during this month to pay an informal visit to his sister, travelling incognito as the Comte de Burgan, and a few very select parties were given in his honour, at all of which Madame de Lamballe was accorded a distinguished place. It was pretty generally understood by now that the Queen was determined to have her Superintendent sooner or later, and though there were still difficulties to overcome, opposition was already weakening. Mercy tried to reassure his Empress in the same breath with himself this winter, by remarking that it would be impossible for such a plan to take effect while the Duchesse de Cossé remained in waiting, and her term of office did not expire for two years, while much might occur in that time. He also pointed out that

the health of the Princesse was bad; she suffered from nerves, convulsions, fainting-fits, and all this would very materially militate against her accepting the post. The grim Maria Theresa, however, who did not place much faith in what she heard of the Princesse, merely remarked that she did not suppose these 'grimaces' would prevent her in the least from taking what she wanted, and her own hope was that the Duchesse de Cossé would remain at her post as long as possible in order that Madame de Lamballe might be disappointed.

It is a little difficult to understand why the Empress should have been so fiercely set against the Princesse de Lamballe, but she was, of course, aware how impressionable her daughter was, and it is to be supposed dreaded the first person, be it man or woman, to whom Marie Antoinette should give her whole heart, recognising how immense a power that person would wield. But the young Queen was too lonely at heart to renounce her friend, and the mere fact of being unable immediately to honour her as she would wish made her eager to confer any other possible favour the Princesse might ask, opportunities for which were not long lacking.

Early in June, Madame de Lamballe had the great felicity of welcoming her father, two brothers, and sister-in-law as guests to her adopted country. They all travelled ostensibly incognito; the Prince de Carignan as Marquis de Marène, Prince Victor and his

wife (daughter of the pushing Comtesse de Brionne) as Comte and Comtesse de Salussole, and Prince Eugène as Comte de Villefranche. The Princesse de Lamballe and her *dame de compagnie*, Madame de Lascases, drove to meet her relatives on their arrival in Paris, and, after a most affectionate greeting, the Prince de Carignan and his youngest son entered Madame de Lamballe's carriage and drove back with her to the Hôtel de Toulouse, Madame de Lascases following in another vehicle, and the 'Salussoles' with Madame de Brionne. At the Hôtel de Toulouse the Duc de Penthièvre received his visitors with the greatest honour; the grand doors were thrown open for them, and in every question of precedence the *pas* was yielded to them. When they left, the Duc himself conducted Madame de Salussole to her carriage, and called upon her next day, as did all the Princes of the Blood, though not the Princesses, as she had not yet been presented. When they dined at the Palais Royal, the Duc d'Orléans, as was inevitable, preceded them politely, but the Duc de Penthièvre followed. In many ways indeed the etiquette of these entertainments seems to us to-day to have been very quaint. When, for instance, the whole Carignan party supped at the Hôtel de Toulouse in the Princesse de Lamballe's apartments, she sent out the invitations herself, but M. de Penthièvre called upon the Comtesse de Brionne, Madame de Salussole, and Mdlle. de Lorraine, and begged for the honour of

their presence, which was not, of course, refused. Twenty people sat down to the banquet, not including the Ambassadress of Sardinia, who preferred to remain in the salon during the meal; while her husband, the Ambassador, and M. de Marène (the Prince de Carignan) did not sup either, but took turns to sit next the Duc de Penthièvre at the corner of the table. Nor were the sexes equally divided, since in one place eight ladies sat together, the hostess in their midst, and in another three men. It was a very merry party, however. The Duc de Penthièvre had always liked the Carignan family, and he saw much of them during their visit, and did his best to make things pleasant for them; nor was a welcome lacking them in a still more exalted quarter.

The Queen was only too anxious to please her friend in honouring her family. It was not possible to offer them any public reception since they were ostensibly travelling incognito, but the Princesse was radiant with pleasure at their presence, and especially at the company of her youngest and favourite brother, Eugène. Either at her suggestion, or from the Queen's kind heart, the project arose to offer Eugène a good post in the French army, and thus keep brother and sister more or less together. The King was approached, and consented at once, delighted to please his wife, and always liking Madame de Lamballe. It is said the Comtesse d'Artois also used her influence in favour of Eugène; at any rate, the matter was

hurried through very quickly, and everything settled within a week. The young Prince was to be made colonel of an infantry regiment newly formed for him, to be called henceforth 'de Savoy-Carignan,' and he was to receive thirty thousand livres a year. No ministers were consulted, and they were all furious at the arrangement. Maria Theresa was extremely vexed when she heard of it, and lamented loudly that the Piedmont party was growing far too strong. Mercy remonstrated with the Queen, who said no doubt he was right, but she could not always refuse her personal feelings; she would, however, be more cautious in the future. He seems to have imagined he had convinced her, but, as we all know, one

> 'Convinced against his will
> Is of the same opinion still.'

The Princesse and her family were overjoyed at the honour done them, and on the strength of it the new colonel—aged twenty-two—and his relatives were presented to the King and Queen at Versailles on the 9th June by the Comte de Viry, Sardinian Ambassador, who was conducted by Le Sieur la Live de la Briche, the 'introducer of Ambassadors.'

The visit of the Carignans must have closed very shortly after this, for the court almost immediately moved to Rheims, where the coronation of Louis XVI. took place on the 11th June. The Queen was present at the coronation, but was not herself crowned, and the name of the Princesse de Lamballe does not

appear at any of the festivities in connection with this great occasion. She was probably either still with her people and sharing their incognito, or, more likely, with her sister-in-law, who was again in delicate health, at the castle of Anet. This castle, together with much other valuable property, had lately come to the Duc de Penthièvre through the death of his cousin, the Comte d'Eu ; and here, on the 3rd July, the Duchesse de Chartres' second son, the Duc de Montpensier, was born. The Duc de Chartres was apprised of the news by a courier, and so soon as the Duchesse was sufficiently recovered, the sisters-in-law set out to travel in Holland and other places. The Prince and Princess of Orange received them with great distinction ; the Duc de Lavanguyon fêted them magnificently ; the Baronne d'Oberkirch speaks of a supper she gave for them at Vanves, and indeed everywhere they seem to have met with the greatest friendliness and honour.

The Princesse de Lamballe was attended on this journey by the Marquise de Broc, and the Duchesse de Chartres by the afterwards famous—or infamous—Madame de Genlis. So far Madame de Chartres had no reason to suppose Madame de Genlis her enemy, and treated her as a friend and intimate rather, a woman whose wide sympathies and intellect had raised her considerably above the class to which she was born. Unknown to the Duchesse, however, Madame de Genlis' relations with the Duc de Chartres

had long been of anything but an innocent character. Her aunt, Madame de Montesson, was the morganatic wife of the old Duc d'Orléans since his wife's death, although the court refused to recognise her; and this niece had been intimate with Chartres long before his marriage. Even her unscrupulous nature demurred at first to accepting a post about the young Duchesse, but Chartres had wished it, and by this time she had grown quite accustomed to the situation, and even derived a certain amount of humour from it. Although her *rôle* so far was to be simple and unobtrusive, she already took quiet note of the characters about her, insisting maliciously upon their failings rather than their virtues. Long after, when the days of summing up arrived, and all who had known the Princesse de Lamballe testified to her gentleness, her charity, her kind heart, noble bearing, and sweet face, Madame de Genlis alone remarked that her hands were large and hideous (a detail which no contemporary portraits bear out), and that her constant fainting-fits were the merest affectation. The unfortunate Princesse, like many very sensitive people, was apt to be thrown into real agitation by certain quite ordinary objects —the sight of a lobster or a bunch of violets always affected her thus—and there was one occasion when, in a picture-gallery in Holland, she fainted quite away before a very realistic picture of an old fish-woman with a basket of lobsters on her arm. No doubt Madame de Genlis was all sympathy and com-

miseration at the moment, but none the less she noted the incident down with scornful contempt for later relation.

Mercy's fears meanwhile were becoming certainties. Both the Duchesse de Cossé and Madame de Noailles had resigned their posts after the coronation at Rheims, and it was understood that the Princesse de Lamballe had been privately but positively promised the post of Superintendent of the Queen's Household. 'The Princesse,' he wrote gloomily to his Empress on the 17th July, 'is still very young, and it remains to be seen whether she will keep in her new position that sweet, sincere, and simple character she has shown so far.' Three days before this, Marie Antoinette herself had written to Count Rosenborg that the matter was indeed settled, though still a secret. 'I shall make my friend happy,' she cried, 'and this will make me even happier than herself,' but it was not till the 15th September that the Empress was officially informed of the appointment. Then her daughter writes, half apologetically, that 'I hope all that my dear mama will learn of Madame de Lamballe will convince her that there is certainly nothing to fear in her connection with my sisters-in-law. She has always had a good reputation, and has not at all the Italian character. Both she and her brother are established here for life, and I am sure they both feel that France is now their true country.' The Baron de Breteuil also endeavoured to reassure the Empress of the innocence

and good heart of the Princesse, but Maria Theresa was but too sceptical by now of the wisdom of much that her daughter chose to do, and her fears of the growing Italian influence in France had received two strong confirmations this very August. Madame Clothilde, the King's sister, was married to the Prince of Piedmont, brother to Mesdames of Provence and Artois: and the Comtesse d'Artois gave birth to a son, the little Duc d'Angoulême, only member so far of a second generation in the royal family. Kind though she was to the baby, Marie Antoinette could not but be sensible of the blow his appearance gave to her own childless position, and, indeed, every one about her felt it equally, except apparently the King. She endeavoured, however, not to allow herself to be worried over such subjects, and to find her happiness in friendship instead.

On the 18th September the Princesse de Lamballe officially took the oath of service, and received her brevet of Superintendent, a long and involved document made out between the King and '*notre très chère et très aimée cousine.*' She was overwhelmed with congratulations, amongst which few came more welcome than those of the loyal people of Brittany, by whom she was not by any means forgotten since her pleasant visit amongst them the preceding year. To their greeting she replied herself:—

'PARIS, *Oct.* 8, 1775.

'I am very sensible, Gentlemen, of the mark of

attention you have given me on the occasion of my nomination to the place of Superintendent of the Queen's Household: I beg you to receive my thanks. The province of Brittany will do me little justice if it doubts the sentiments I have for it: I should like always to be able to give testimony to my feelings of regard for it. I beg you to believe, Gentlemen, the sincere esteem in which I hold you.

M. T. L. DE SAVOYE.'

Although now really Superintendent, the troubles connected with the nomination were not yet at an end. It was so long since the post had been held that nobody knew exactly in what either the duties or the privileges consisted, and in the long result they seem to have meant very much what they were desired to mean at the moment. The title was an excuse to be constantly about the Queen when both wished it, but otherwise the Princesse might absent herself from court for months, and affairs in the palace ran on much the same. No letters, petitions, or memoranda were supposed to reach the Queen's hands but through the Superintendent, who also gave all orders, was responsible for the management of every detail in the Household, and, most important charge of all, had the honour of giving all entertainments in the Queen's name, and of inviting her chosen guests. This last involved a good deal of expense, and a handsome allowance was usually

made to the Superintendent in order to cover it; but the granting of this allowance had in fact been the chief obstacle to the whole scheme. The finances of the country were at a very low ebb, and ministers did not wish to encourage extravagant gaieties at court. Besides, the Princesse de Lamballe was a very rich woman, and her father-in-law an exceedingly wealthy man: she would not need so large a sum as Mdlle. de Clermont had had: let them, it was suggested, cut down her allowance, and at the same time qualify the absolute authority that accompanied the post. The Abbé de Vermond confidentially proposed a compromise to the Queen: should he arrange it? Gladly she gave him permission, trusting implicitly in his discretion; but now there arose a fresh power with which to reckon. Gentle and simple and tender as the Princesse had hitherto been, on a matter of privilege she showed herself adamant. She would have no post shorn of half its honours, she protested; the Duc de Penthièvre would not permit her to accept it; rather—and she spoke with tears—she would resign all her prerogatives at court, and retire once more into the solitude she loved at Rambouillet. It was for the Queen to choose. And the Queen, bewildered, amazed, excited, and never in the least really understanding the characters of those about her, clasped the dear friend in her arms, vowed she should have all she asked, and implored her never to dream of

leaving her. The next day the King signed an order, granting the Princesse 50,000 crowns a year for her expenses.

Needless to say, this transaction provided a great opportunity for the enemies of the Princesse to accuse her of greed, meanness, avarice, and every conceivable vice. Yet it was perfectly natural that in accepting so important a post, she should presume the same conditions and particularly the same prestige would apply to it as before. If she allowed herself to be foisted off now with inferior rights, her position at court would never be the same again; and as to the state of the country's finances, nobody at court ever supposed that that could have any effect upon their pleasures,—it was only the usual croaking to be expected from ministers. True, the income was not a necessity to her, but it was a part of the post, and she would have the post intact or not at all—and got it. But the little *contretemps* was remembered against her; and when her enemies could find no other scandal among a notoriously scandalous court to fix upon her, they fixed that. Mercy, writing a month later to his Empress, seems to shake his head as he says: 'The Baron de Breteuil's praises of the Princesse de Lamballe seem so far well founded, but this Princesse is too young and at the same time too new at court for one to give a certain opinion as to the course she will choose; while the steps she took when there was a question of fixing the rights and emolu-

ments of her charge might throw some doubts upon her intentions.'

Another unfortunate consequence of the friction at this time was the continued ill-relations between the Princesse and the Abbé de Vermond. The Abbé was not liked by any one at court, from the King downward; but there were from this time forth particular jealousies between him and Madame de Lamballe as to the possession of the Queen's confidence. The Princesse considered that he had done his best to destroy her prestige at court, and henceforth her position as Superintendent gave her many opportunities of interfering with his plans and influence, each of which she religiously pursued. But all this came later, during the winter, and for the few weeks of that autumn Queen and Princesse lived in the perfect happiness of friendship together. On the 2nd October they went alone to M. de Penthièvre's country house at Sceaux, and spent a long and delightful day there; later the whole court adjourned to Choisy, and the friends passed an ideal month in the gardens and on the river. Certain odd little incidents of their sojourn there are preserved to us; as that walking one day by the river bank they found a gondola waiting, and expressed their intention of entering it, on which the boatmen leapt into the river, splashing and diving to show their joy and pride; and the two ladies, thinking them drowned, both fainted on the spot. Again, at Fontainebleau,

when in a covered gondola together, a window fell, bruising the arm of the Princesse, who fainted once more, alarming the Queen very greatly, but thanks to having her promptly bled, she quickly recovered. One is apt to regard these constant fainting-fits as rather poor-spirited; but we have to remember that this was the age of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, not thirty years since *Pamela* and *Clarissa* had shown young English women, however robust, that the only proper means for a susceptible female to meet any kind of shock, was to swoon instantly and without hesitation. The Princesse de Lamballe was anything but robust, and her unconscious fits lasted often so long that there cannot possibly have been, as Madame de Genlis chooses to hint, anything supposititious about them. She was always at her best, both in health and happiness, in the pleasant country life she so enjoyed, and the excitement and turmoil of a court career were never congenial to her. Nor, upon the whole, did she spend any more time at court than she could possibly avoid.

CHAPTER VIII

1775-6

The court returned to Versailles for the winter, which was a particularly severe one this year, 1775-6. The Queen's sleigh parties became more famous than ever, and she and her chosen friend the Princesse de Lamballe, looking, Madame Campan exclaims, like 'spring clothed with ermine,' a 'rose in snow,' were constantly to be seen skimming about the country roads, and even sometimes through the streets of Paris. This was not very wise; for a hard winter meant more than pleasant parties to the poor of the great city; hunger, cold, loss of work, starvation, death; and though the Queen, out of the kindness of her heart, sent large sums from her private purse to relieve their necessities, it was difficult for them to believe, when they watched her driving through their midst, gay and laughing, wrapped in furs and sparkling with jewels, that she really cared in the least for their despair. For a really intelligent and quick-witted woman, Marie Antoinette seems from the beginning to have suffered from an absolutely extraordinary lack of tact; and this, coupled with her

mad imprudence and restless craving for excitement, will in fact sum up the whole list of her failings. Yet, for a queen, hardly any failings could be worse.

It was about this time that the Princesse de Lamballe seems to have been at the very summit of her favour and happiness, and indications of a decline were already not wanting. It may, therefore, be advisable here to give some account of her appearance and character, as gathered from the memoirs of the period, since contemporary evidence must carry more weight than any of the portraits and busts that have been left to us. She was not a tall woman, it appears, and possessed a particularly small head and features even for her height. Madame Le Brun, who painted her, and must, therefore, have studied her face with some care, says she was not exactly pretty, but seemed so at a little distance ; had a dazzlingly fair complexion, elegant figure, and the most beautiful blonde hair imaginable. This hair, in fact, was her chief beauty, and one of her attendants reports that one day, returning from her bath, it fell from beneath her cap where she had loosely gathered it, and completely covered her. The Baronne d'Oberkirch describes her as 'very pretty, though with irregular features ; gay and lively ; she has not much wit, and avoids discussions and disputes ; is incapable of even thinking harm : the shaft of calumny was never directed against her. . . . She gives immensely more than she can afford . . . is a model of all the

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virtues.' The Goncourt brothers, in a passage which must inevitably be read in the original, since the charm of it escapes translation, have spoken of her thus:—

'La plus grande beauté de Madame la Princesse de Lamballe était la sérénité de sa physionomie. L'éclair même de ses yeux était tranquille. Malgré les secousses et les fièvres d'une maladie nerveuse il n'y avait pas un pli, pas un nuage sur son beau front, battu de ces longs cheveux blonds qui bouclèrent encore autour de la pique de Septembre. Italienne, Madame avait les grâces du Nord, et elle n'était jamais plus belle qu'en traîneau, sous la martre et sous l'hermine, le teint fouetté par un vent de neige, ou bien encore lorsque dans l'ombre d'un grand chapeau de paille dans un nuage de linon, elle passait comme un de ces rêves dont le peintre anglais Lawrence promène la robe blanche sur les verdures mouillées.'

The Prince de Ligne, who seldom had a fair word for anybody, said of Madame de Lamballe only that 'she was as good as she was pretty'; and even her enemy Madame de Genlis qualifies her dislike in describing her as 'of a fragile appearance, delicately pretty, with irregular features, and large and ugly hands.' She adds that in disposition she was gay, obliging, good-natured, and that rarity, a Piedmontese without intrigue; but this was natural, since she had not the wit for it, and would hide

her absolute foolishness under a childish air, gazing aimlessly out of the window while a new subject was under discussion until some witty decision was arrived at, when she would suddenly turn round and claim that as her own. Madame de Genlis goes on to say that she did this so cleverly that it was long before she herself could detect her in the trick; yet surely, even if the story were true, a person who could so promptly decide upon an argument and reason at an instant's notice in its favour so ably as for some time to deceive the shrewd Genlis herself, cannot have been absolutely destitute of all sense.

This lady also describes the Princesse's fainting-fits as fictional, and assumed for effect, saying that nobody believed in them, and that for a whole year she made a point of fainting twice a week at fixed hours, when her doctor was ready in waiting to attend upon her. One day, after supper, during a visit to Crécy, she says, M. de Penthièvre had retired early to bed, but the rest of the company sat on in the salon while Mdlle. Bagarotti, an admirable *raconteuse*, related ghost stories. Suddenly, at a thrilling moment, one of the servants in waiting yawned loudly, and Madame de Lamballe immediately fainted. She remained unconscious so long that Madame de Genlis, impatient at the fuss made about her, insisted on sending for the Duc's surgeon, M. Guenalt. He was in bed, but was quickly roused, and ran down in his dressing-gown, much excited at the

honour of attending the Princesse. Madame de Genlis told him brusquely to bleed her in the foot, to which he objected that it was too soon after supper, but the Governess declared that she had noticed the Princesse ate nothing; so Guenalt sent for hot water and bowls, insisted that the Duc should be waked, and was just about to commence proceedings when the Princesse quietly recovered consciousness. Madame de Genlis never tired of telling this story as a proof that the unfortunate lady had been shamming the whole time; but it does not in fact seem to prove anything except the dilatoriness of the means provided for her relief. Lauzun also repeats the tale, and adds that she fainted at the sight of shrimps, a fable into which the story of the lobster picture in Holland had evidently grown.

Deducting the bitterness of malice from these last reports, it is plain from other sources that the Princesse was not a clever woman. She possessed, too, the defects of her qualities. Straightforward, high-principled, and very religious, she looked a little narrow-mindedly upon others whose temptations had never touched her. Kind, generous, and very charitable, she certainly grasped at all the wealthy posts that came her way, but only that she might have the more to give. We are also told that she kept accounts very badly—a feminine failing which may easily be forgiven her. 'How happy are the needy who come to you!' the Queen wrote to her. 'It is

impossible for me to refuse anything you ask, dear friend. But do you only stay with me for the sake of your poor?' Lastly, and it was the rock on which the friendship nearly broke, she laid great stress upon the proper use of forms and ceremonies. Marie Antoinette hated etiquette in all its forms, and could not understand her friend's insistence that all court privileges should be seriously accepted, and everything done in proper order. The Princesse preferred a country life, but if she was to have a post at court, she would see that no established convention should be disregarded. To a certain extent she was right, for etiquette, though the weariness of royalty, is at the same time its safeguard, and it would be difficult to say how largely, by disregarding custom and loosening ceremony, Marie Antoinette ultimately contributed to her own downfall. Even the smallest matters had their influence. For instance, while the old King lived, the Dauphin and his brothers and their wives made a pleasant little informal society together; but when the Dauphin became King, the brothers became his subjects, and should have been on quite a different footing; but Marie Antoinette would not allow this. She said it was absurd to be treated with ceremony by the sisters- and brothers-in-law with whom she had been on terms of such intimacy; for them to stand in her presence, and address her by her titles; and she insisted that things were to remain just as they had

been before. Yet their interests were necessarily different, and in a few years' time she was sorry indeed to have done this; but it was too late then to withdraw permission, and Monsieur and Madame and the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois treated her with scant respect all her life in consequence.

There were, of course, plenty of people to encourage the Queen in her unconventionality and disregard of custom: the Abbé de Vermond had from the first sneered at the paraphernalia of changing guards about the palace, and the hundred and one details of court life constantly demanding attention—it was another subject on which he and the Princesse de Lamballe clashed. Very early in his reign Louis XVI. made his wife a present of the delightful house and gardens of Petit Trianon, where she could be as rural as she chose, ask her own friends, wear simple muslin frocks, and play at being nobody in particular. Yet here also she overdid the charms of insignificance, not allowing her friends to rise when she entered a room, or pay her any ordinary attentions, much less those due to the Queen of France. She devised fancy dress balls, disguises in which she thought herself unrecognised, but in which every one knew her; incognito jaunts to Paris, absurd games in which for a moment she could lay aside her rank; and the meaning of it all was that the little Austrian princess was growing fast, developing from the child she had been, easily satisfied with a pretty and charming

companion of her own sex, to a woman with capacities for real passion; dissatisfied, restless, impulsive, hungry for she knew not what, aware of enemies about her, yet casting prudence to the winds in her wild craving for excitement. Had she been happy in her family life, all might have been different; but although rapidly overcoming his shyness, Louis was still no real husband to her. She grew quickly bored with her surroundings, flitted from friend to friend, set fiercely on the whim of the moment and equally indifferent to it a week later. The men of the court tried to make love to her, and her name was unpleasantly coupled with many of them from time to time: Lauzun, Bezenval, Esterhazy, Chartres, even her young brother-in-law the Comte d'Artois; but though she was madly foolish in the latitude she allowed them, there never seems to have been the least real foundation for these tales. For more than a hundred years, every day of Marie Antoinette's life has been searched into and written about, and no serious charge has ever been proved against her. Perhaps the truest adorer she ever had was the young Swedish Count Fersen, who loved her from the first moment he saw her as Dauphiness, left the court and spent years in America lest his devotion might be recognised to her detriment, and returned to risk his life devising reckless plans for her escape when all the butterfly courtiers of gayer days had fled. But one hears little of Fersen till the skies grew dark.

A new and very important factor, however, was at this time just entering into the Queen's life. At one of the winter receptions she perceived a young lady whom she had not noticed at court before, very youthful, very pretty, apparently very retiring, wearing a simple white frock, in great contrast to the magnificent costumes of the other ladies present; and on inquiring her name she was told it was the Comtesse Jules de Polignac. Feeling an unaccountable interest in the new comer, she sent for her and asked why she had never appeared at court before, to which the young Comtesse frankly replied that her husband was too poor to afford it. Marie Antoinette seems to have been strangely moved by the interview, and declared afterwards that the Comtesse was 'an angel,' and her poverty at least should be remedied at once, in which she was as good as her word. In a very short time all the Comte's debts were paid—a matter of some 400,000 francs, the Comtesse was given apartments at Versailles, and Marie Antoinette congratulated herself on having again found a kindred soul.

The Queen made and unmade so many friends that no one paid particular attention at first to Madame de Polignac, nor dreamed that her influence could ever supersede that of the Princesse de Lamballe; but she had powerful friends at her back, and perhaps the most powerful of all was her own indifference. She never had the least personal feeling for the Queen,

and scarcely pretended it, but there seems no doubt that Marie Antoinette was more and longer infatuated with her than with any one else in the whole course of her life. For fourteen years the influence of the Polignacs was paramount and disastrous in the French court. This influence was chiefly wielded by the Comtesse Diane, sister-in-law of the Queen's favourite, a lady who had been much at the court of Louis XV., and since his death had been appointed court reader, lady to the Comtesse d'Artois, and afterwards to the little Princesse Elizabeth, a charge she systematically neglected; till one day Elizabeth, a lean, brown, silent, enigmatic little thing, who at eleven had cried herself sick at her sister's wedding, ran away to a convent near by, whence her brother the King fetched her home himself. The Queen had hitherto disliked Comtesse Diane, who, though shy, was too clever and sarcastic to be a comfortable companion for poor Marie Antoinette, always sensible of the deficiencies of her own education; but any relative of the new favourite must receive reflected honour, and through her sister-in-law Diane worked more havoc in France than any one realised. The Comtesse Jules herself, Gabrielle Yolande, *née* Polastron, had been an orphan from birth, and was married to the Comte at seventeen; she was now about twenty-five, but looked less. Diane describes her as 'very pretty, with blue eyes, a tip-tilted nose, and pretty teeth.' The Baronne d'Oberkirch, less interested perhaps,

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says she was small and ill-made, with a bad and ungraceful walk, a beautiful face except for the forehead, which was brown and of a disagreeable shape, an enchanting smile, simple manners, and she was never dull. Here, no doubt, lay her charm for Marie Antoinette, who, after a very short intimacy, simply would not let her go. The Comtesse was frankly bored with court life, and would not have stayed a month but for the Queen's importunities and the handsome emoluments she obtained for her family and friends. She, too, was set against formality, some reason for which might lie in the fact that her own rank was not high, and she took no particular place among the court ladies; but her hatred of ceremony fell in too appositely with the Queen's own feelings; and Paris was soon scandalised with the accounts of the childish romps and wild games for which the stately salons of Versailles soon became famous.

Marie Antoinette's first impulse on securing this new friend was that she should be a friend to the Princesse de Lamballe too. To her surprise, neither lady seemed particularly drawn towards the other: they had not, in fact, a single thought in common. Madame de Lamballe really loved the Queen, and foresaw with sorrow not only the decrease of her own influence, but the disastrous foolishness of much into which Marie Antoinette was being led by her new friend. Realising, however, the hopelessness of remonstrance at the moment, she set her lips and

awaited in silence all that the Queen might choose to do. She had looked in the face of trouble, and she sprang from an ancient race, therefore from her came no complaint; but the Comtesse de Polignac, realising the situation shrewdly enough, meant to let no advantage slip. In words and looks and dropped sentences, ridicule and contempt were insinuated against the Princesse. Marie Antoinette, always at the mercy of her chief friend's opinion, half began to believe there might be truth in the tales: she was bored, too, by the constant atmosphere of friction; realised that it might not be easy to keep both her friends on equal terms, and for the moment, from sheer novelty, the Comtesse excited and interested her the most. Thus she had scarcely won the long struggle for her Superintendent of the Household before she began to wish it undone, and certain incidents helped to fan the flame of her annoyance. A chief part of the Superintendent's duties was, as has been pointed out, to give the Queen's balls and invite her guests; but a Princess of the Blood never issued invitations, she merely announced that she would receive on a certain evening, and all those of the court who wished could wait upon her. Standing upon her privilege of rank, this was the course the Princesse adopted, and it offended many who expected explicit invitations, so that very few people attended her balls, and the Queen was vexed, while the Polignacs whispered that the Princesse had

blundered, and lacked in respect and the proper performance of her duties.

The action was foolish, no doubt, for Marie Antoinette loved dancing, and to please her at this time several outsiders of the court gave balls in her honour, to which she came early and stayed late. The Duc de Chartres gave one in February 1776, of which we hear especially, because the headdress the Queen wore at it was so high that an *étage* of the staircase had to be taken down before she could enter the ballroom. These huge headdresses were the very ugly fashion of the time, and Marie Antoinette was passing through a phase when it was absolutely necessary for her to lead the *dernier cri* of fashion. Some designs for them have come down to us, and read very strangely. One lady appeared with the four quarters of the globe, sun, moon, and stars represented on her head; another with a meadow watered by a brook, a windmill, shepherd and a flock of lambs; yet another with a parasol that would open and shut. The Queen had her picture painted with some such extravagant headdress, and sent it to the Empress Maria Theresa, who returned it with the caustic remark that this must be the portrait of an actress, and not her daughter. The Duchesse de Chartres excelled in devising weird ornaments for herself, and appeared one day with her hair dressed to represent her son, the Duc de Valois, of whom she was very proud, asleep in his nurse's arms; and on another occasion

with a man-of-war in full sail, in allusion to her husband's ambition to become Admiral of the French Fleet. Madame de Chartres also introduced her own dressmaker, Mdlle. Bertin, to the Queen; and this woman encouraged her Majesty in many extravagant and fantastic notions of dress.

The Duc de Chartres was rather in favour with Marie Antoinette at this time, though he afterwards fell wofully from that position; he was also very friendly with the young Comte d'Artois, with whom he had many tastes in common. Again, he was very desirous to rise to high rank in the French navy, and especially to become Chief Admiral of France after his father-in-law, the Duc de Penthièvre; and it is possible that if he had been allowed to assume this post he might have been kept faithful, but the King always disliked and distrusted him, and the court party managed to quash his ambitions and sour his views of life. His moral character was, of course, never good, but his wife's fondness for him had not yet declined, though she already found she had a good deal to put up with: and the Princesse de Lamballe was always strangely lenient to his erratic proceedings. She and her sister-in-law were one day staying with the Duchesse de Bourbon, sister to the Duc de Chartres, at her castle at Vanves; and Chartres was informed that it was to be a female party, and his company was not required. This put him on his mettle, and he and his inseparable friend,

the Comte de Fitz-James, together with M. de Thiers, determined to obtain admission. The two first disguised themselves respectively as a bear and a tiger, and M. de Thiers, as their keeper, arrived at Vanves, and demanded to be allowed to show his beasts and their tricks to the ladies, permission for which was graciously accorded. The three princesses came out on the steps and were much amused at the gambols of the animals, who, however, suddenly affected to break their chains and scamper upstairs after them, rushing into all the rooms, destroying the dinner, ready laid, and playing many monkey-tricks—*singeries*—on the shrieking fair ones.

All seems to have been very readily forgiven, and indeed this is not the only indication of the rather rowdy kind of merriment which seems to have been fashionable at the court of Marie Antoinette. Madame de Lamballe regretting one day that she had not been able to be present at a party the Queen had given the night before at Trianon to her intimates, Marie Antoinette replied carelessly, 'Oh well, you really missed very little, for not a thing was broken.'

The Superintendent of the Household naturally had a handsome suite of rooms allotted to her at Versailles, situated at the corner of the Aile de Midi; but desiring also to have a house of her own in Paris, where she could have an English garden, she bought from her father-in-law the Hôtel de Maine, formerly

the Hôtel d'Eu, next to his own house, for which she paid the sum of 70,000 livres. This was in November 1775, but she seems really to have used the mansion very little, for when in Paris she nearly always stayed with the Duc de Penthièvre at the Hôtel de Toulouse. With all her faults, the Princesse de Lamballe was a very loyal friend and never forgot a service; and when the Comtesse de la Marche resigned her post in December of this year, although acutely sensible of her own loss of favour with the Queen, she yet imperilled her position in courageously demanding for the Comtesse what was in fact her due, the pension of a Princess of the Blood. Mercy was very angry at this, regarding it as a fresh presumption on the Superintendent's part, and he declared to the Empress that what with her brother and her friends, she already cost the nation more than one hundred thousand crowns a year, and was still not satisfied. Nevertheless, Madame de la Marche got her pension.

CHAPTER IX

1776-8

Marie Antoinette did not, even at this time, confine her intimacy wholly to the Princesse de Lamballe and the Comtesse de Polignac. She was also very friendly with the Comtesse de Dillon, a niece of the Archbishop Narbonne; and this Madame de Dillon had an open *liaison* with the Prince de Guéméné, whose wife perfectly acquiesced in the position, had her own lover, the Duc de Coigny, and was constantly to be found in the salon of her husband's mistress. Such a state of things was so usual that the Queen never dreamed of disapproval; Madame de Polignac herself had an acknowledged lover, the Comte de Vaudreuil, for whom Marie Antoinette even exerted herself to find a good post, which brought him in 30,000 francs (£1200) a year. To the honour of the Abbé de Vermond, it must be pointed out that he alone took occasion to upbraid the Queen for her choice of associates, declaring that she had not even the common prudence to keep with women of good reputation. To this she asked with spirit what charge he had to make against the character of the

Princesse de Lamballe, and, little though he liked the Princesse, he could make none. But it was certainly unfortunate that the Queen should encourage such women about her, and very shortly Madame de Guéméné rose even higher in her favour than Madame de Dillon, so high that for some while she was reckoned the Queen's third favourite, and had quite an accredited party at court.

It is not difficult to see where the attraction lay for Marie Antoinette, always eager for something new. Victoire Armande de Rohan Soubise, Princesse de Guéméné, was a curious woman, believed in spiritualism, fell suddenly into trances, kept a whole horde of dogs always about her, declaring that through them she held communion with the spirits of her dead friends, and treated the Queen quite as an equal. She took very little interest in politics, but was niece to Madame de Marsan, who had been Governess to the royal princesses till this year, 1776, when, Princesse Clothilde being married and Princesse Elizabeth alone left, she wished to resign her post, but only in favour of her niece the Princesse de Guéméné. The Queen was quite pleased to appoint this Princesse to the post, and the rooms she now had in Versailles threw them very much together. Madame de Guéméné was also very friendly with Madame de Polignac, who, having so far no official post at court, had only a little set of rooms near the Queen, and was therefore very glad to entertain her

friends in the salon of the Governess. The Polignac party was growing very strong at court; the Duc de Choiseul (who had been recalled at the time of the coronation), the Duc de Coigny, the Duc de Guines, the Baron de Bezenval, and many others, being strong partisans of the Comtesses Diane and Jules; and the Queen was so constantly in the rooms of Madame de Guéméné that Mercy grew seriously uneasy as to the influences that might be brought to bear upon her there. 'It is the most vexatious habit,' he writes, 'that the Queen has yet contracted, both on account of the kind of people that frequent the salon of the Governess, and because of their trick of entangling the Queen in snares which she does not see.' On the other hand, the Princesse de Lamballe had all the Palais Royal clique at her rooms, and the worried Mercy distrusted these equally. 'The Duc de Chartres and those who hold by him and his friends,' he says, 'find a *rendez-vous* in the salon of the Princesse de Lamballe, and I am profoundly suspicious of their doings and intrigues.'

The Queen's love had not entirely left the friend of whom she had once declared that she was the charm of her life; often, when tired and bored with noisy games, she would come to the rooms of this Princesse, whose sweetness and serenity never left her; and was indeed once heard to say, 'She is the only woman I know who never bears a grudge; neither hatred nor jealousy is to be found in her.' But a restless fit

would seize the Queen again, and she would hurry away to some mad dance or foolish merriment. Unfortunately all this gaiety was doing her a great deal of harm; and not only in the palace, but among the people, the Queen began rapidly to be looked upon with contempt and disfavour. Tales of what happened at Versailles, foolish enough to start with, were grossly exaggerated before they reached the populace, and a strong undercurrent of dislike and disapproval set in against Marie Antoinette and her favourites. The blame as usual was set at the wrong door, but the Princesse de Lamballe, after much personal hesitation, conceived it her duty to warn the Queen of much that was said, and to implore her to use and act more upon her own judgment in future, and less on that of unscrupulous advisers about her. The remonstrance met with such a result as might have been expected. Marie Antoinette was annoyed at being 'scolded,' answered shortly, turned away, and told the whole story to the Polignacs, who laughed heartily at the strait-laced Princesse, and voted her a bore, deadliest of names. 'The Princesse de Lamballe loses much in favour,' wrote Mercy in April 1776. 'I believe she will always be well treated by the Queen, but she no longer possesses her entire confidence.' And again, a month later, he speaks of 'constant quarrels, in which the Princesse seemed always to be in the wrong.'

Early in June Madame de Lamballe went to Plom-

bières, where she always spent some six or eight weeks every year to drink the waters; and very shortly after she was taken seriously ill with measles. The news, it appears, took some time to reach the court, for not till the 16th July does Mercy write that he had found the Queen very much upset and alarmed at her favourite's illness, of which she had only just heard. 'All her affection seems roused again, and it is more marked than I should have imagined. I still think, however, the credit of the Princesse declines, and in spite of her drawbacks I could almost wish her in favour again at the expense of Madame de Polignac, who is far more dangerous in views and intentions.' Mercy was himself in the midst of a *liaison* with a pretty Opera singer just now, and does not seem to have been much comfort to the Queen; but the Duc de Lauzun was just about to start for Plombières, so she sent for him, and gave him a great bundle of letters to deliver, with strict injunctions to send her immediate news of the dear invalid's progress. By the time Lauzun reached Plombières, however, the Princesse was already much better, and overjoyed to hear the kind messages and read the letters, to all of which she was able to reply herself. She also asked that the governorship of Poitou, vacant by the death of the Prince de Bourbon-Conti, might be bestowed upon her brother-in-law the Duc de Chartres, and the Queen, in a glow of reviving friendship, obtained the post for her.

The Princesse did not leave Plombières till the end of August, and then travelled to Versailles through Nancy, where she was received on the way with semi-royal honours. A detachment of the La Rochefoucauld Dragoons and another of the Regiment du Roi met her and formed a double line to Government House, where she alighted, and received the compliments of the Chamber, the University, and the various public bodies of the town. After dining, she walked on foot down the streets to her carriage, amidst vociferous and hearty cheerings, and finally left at about six o'clock. It was three months since she had left Versailles, and she found affairs in very much the same state as before. The Polignacs were still in high favour, and Mercy in a worried state, declaring them to be even more expensive to the nation than herself. They had lately obtained control of a royal estate bringing in 100,000 francs income, and not content with that, demanded the very lucrative supervision of the whole postal system as well. The Queen, charmed to see her first friend once more, made a real endeavour to divide her friendship impartially between her and the Comtesse, and spent alternate evenings in the apartments of the Superintendent and the Governess ('equally dangerous,' says Mercy); but the Polignacs, whose stronghold was with Madame de Guéméné, were a clever and a powerful party, and did not intend to let any advantage slip from their grasp.

Marie Antoinette had never cared much for the stiff card-parties which were a necessary feature of court etiquette, but lately she had developed a great taste for high play, and expected her favourites to arrange gambling games for her amusement in their rooms. Madame de Guéméné was nothing loth, and even Madame de Lamballe, in spite of her personal disapproval, was obliged to permit the same in her salon, since she would otherwise hardly ever have so much as seen the Queen. It was a most unfortunate taste of Marie Antoinette's, for many of the courtiers were not able to afford the high stakes she expected, and which alone seemed to satisfy her wild craving for excitement, while very soon she herself fell heavily into debt. The tone of the court was lowered also, for any one with sufficient money to take part in the game, whether presented at court or not, was welcome to appear; and as a matter of fact the Queen of France passed most of her evenings in what was practically an open gaming-room; nor was she always free from unpleasant charges of swindling and foul play in her presence. A new and very fashionable game named Pharaon had lately been introduced into France, but conduced to such ruinously high play that the King took the severe step of forbidding it by law. This made the Queen wild to try it, and she implored her husband so earnestly that at last he granted her permission to play, but for one night only. She

interpreted this to mean one sitting, and having sent for 'bankers' from Paris to instruct them in the rules of the game, she and her friends sat down to it in Madame de Lamballe's rooms for thirty-six consecutive hours. Relays of players succeeded one another, and from the evening of the 30th October till the morning of November 1st, two whole nights and a day, the table was constantly crowded. The Princesse de Lamballe had always disliked gambling, and one realises that this occasion must have been a great trial to her; but it was better that the Queen should find her amusement in her Superintendent's rooms than among more questionable society. Subsequently, however, she became still more disinclined to entertain, until the Queen grew quite angry, declaring it at least her duty to give suppers before the private balls, which she therefore did, but invited only women guests. Early in February 1777 M. de Chartres gave another ball in the Queen's honour, to which she went dressed *en sultane*, supping first with Madame de Lamballe and twelve other ladies; but the lack of male society was beginning to bore her, and she hurried on early to enjoy herself at the Palais Royal. In March Mercy reports that the Superintendent seems really to be growing resigned to sharing her influence with the Polignacs.

In all accounts of the gaieties of court life at this time one name is conspicuous by its absence—the

King's. Louis had nothing in common with the society his wife loved, and did not even seem to realise that he owed her anything more than to pay the debts she incurred,—which he most generously did; and she promptly lost the money again, if not at cards, in bets on horse-races, a form of amusement the Comte d'Artois had lately introduced from England. In the spring of 1777, however, a change came over all this. The Emperor Joseph, eldest brother of Marie Antoinette, proposed to pay his long-promised visit to France, and the Queen, who had not seen him since her child-marriage, and who held him in some awe, was all a-flutter that he should approve of her appearance, her position, and her friends.

Joseph was a strong man, something in the style of Peter the Great of Russia, and there seems little doubt he came to France in consequence of the unsatisfactory tales he had heard concerning his sister. He hugged his mother's prejudices, it is true; but a good deal needed putting to rights at Versailles, and on the whole he did it very completely. After various postponements, he arrived on the 18th April, travelling incognito as the Comte de Falkenstein, and refusing to accept the rooms his sister had prepared for him in the palace, saying he preferred to be independent, and lodge by himself in the town. He was immensely struck with Marie Antoinette's good looks, had no idea she was so pretty, and was equally charmed with her manners. He

strongly disapproved of her sisters-in-law and all her friends, and told her so; to which she, anxious to please him, replied a little weakly that she knew her affection had often deceived her, and that she already heartily repented having given so important a position to Madame de Lamballe. This was but three days after his arrival, and it is possible he thought better of the Princesse before his departure, which did not take place till the end of May. A week before, he visited the Duc de Penthièvre at Sceaux, but gave some disappointment by refusing to accept a meal there, arriving very late, and just hurrying round the gardens in the course of the afternoon. The Duchesse de Chartres, the Princesse de Lamballe, and the Princesse de Conti assisted the Duc de Penthièvre to receive him. In spite of his rough and boorish manners, the Emperor was very generally liked at court, though a good many long faces were pulled after his departure, when it was discovered that he had left no tips whatever behind him. Madame Adélaïde threw her arms round his neck and embraced him when he went; but he himself was said, next to his sister, to take the chief interest in little Princesse Elizabeth. One really important matter he set right, however. He spoke seriously to the King concerning his extraordinary neglect of his wife, finally broke the ice between them, and after his departure the couple lived happily together in a really natural way.

Marie Antoinette seems to have been much influenced by her brother's advice and reprimands, and resolved in future to live more quietly and circumspectly. The day he left she spent alone in her rooms with Madame de Lamballe, Madame de Polignac, and one other lady. During the summer Madame de Lamballe again passed some weeks at Plombières, and on her return at the end of August was received very warmly by the Queen. Mercy, however, remained sceptical as to her Majesty's real feelings for the Superintendent, and says this seeming kindness was merely a manner, and that really the Queen found her earliest friend very tiresome. Shortly before, the Duchesse de Chartres had given birth to twin daughters, to the elder of whom the King and Madame Adélaïde offered to become godparents, and the christening took place at court. At the last moment the Duchesse turned quickly to the King and begged him to name her daughter Eugénie in addition to Adélaïde, as already settled. 'Why?' he asked. 'I will explain to your Majesty later,' she said in great agitation, and he good-naturedly acceded to her request. Afterwards she told him of the mutual vow she had made with her schoolfellow the day she left the Convent of Montmartre, and explained that as this was her first daughter, it was imperatively necessary she should be named Eugénie. The King knew the Baronne de Talleyrand, and next time he saw her, remarked,

'Little Baronne! I am sorry to see you do not keep your word,' adding, as he saw her mystification, 'Madame la Duchesse de Chartres has a daughter whom she has named Eugénie.' 'Alas, sire!' exclaimed the young Baronne, 'God has not permitted me to keep my word to the being I love best on earth. I have no daughter.'

The Princesse de Lamballe accompanied the Queen often to the play during the following winter; and times were becoming more frequent when even the constant *naïve* impertinences and sarcasms of Madame de Polignac failed to amuse her Majesty; yet still the old complaints dragged on that the Princesse did not entertain sufficiently to please her. In spite of her promises to her brother, the Queen pined again for excitement, and found it in the somewhat dangerous amusement of going disguised with a party of ladies to the masked balls at the Opera. She fancied herself unknown, but every one she met was very well aware who she was. On the 2nd January 1778 she went dressed as an Amazon, with the Comtesse de Provence, the Princesse de Lamballe, and eight other ladies in dominoes, to one of these balls; and seeing a very gay reveller, tapped him on the arm, and asked laughing, 'Who art thou, *beau masque*?' 'Thy subject, fair Amazon,' came the prompt reply, and removing his mask the Queen saw the face of her young brother-in-law, the Comte d'Artois. No other man would have dared

to know her, but she would have been equally recognisable all the same. This Comte d'Artois prided himself upon being the greatest dandy in France; and it is said that he engaged four of the tallest lackeys he could find, to lift him up every morning and drop him gently into his trousers, that he might wear them without a wrinkle; while at night they must, with a little more difficulty, perform the similar office of lifting him out again. His charm, his brilliance, and his talents seem unfortunately to have been all expended upon fooleries like these, or upon gambling, betting, horse-racing, and even still more harmful tastes.

Friction arose again in the summer of 1778 between the Princesse de Lamballe and the Abbé de Vermond. The Abbé had delivered a memorial to the Queen without informing the Superintendent of it, and all such matters should, strictly speaking, pass through her hands alone. During the constant months when she was absent from court, the rule must of course have been frequently relaxed; but the Abbé was an enemy, and should not be allowed to take advantage of any such leniency. She informed the Queen that if he remained about her she herself must resign her post. The matter was finally adjusted, but the Queen continued much annoyed at the quarrel, and Mercy sagely remarks that the Princesse has 'lost more and more in the Queen's affection, and happily her Majesty's eyes are opened

at last to the Superintendent, who joins very little wit to many essential faults, of which she was scarcely sensible till now.'

But however much her favour might have declined at court, the Princesse was still a great favourite in France. Poets and writers dedicated books to her; she was received with almost royal honours wherever she went; love and admiration seemed to encompass her on every side. She felt deeply, however, the Queen's coldness, and this summer travelled again for some months in Holland with her sister-in-law, the Duchesse de Chartres, in order to distract her mind from it. Mercy is pleased to term this an abandonment of her post, but it is very certain she would not have gone had she received any encouragement to remain. There was, however, good reason why all the Queen's friends should rally close about her just now, for, to the great joy of the kingdom, the birth of an heir was expected in the following winter. The summer was particularly warm, and in all innocence of heart the Queen walked often for her health's sake with some of her ladies upon the terrace at Versailles after dark, a distant band playing among the trees. This very simple recreation was afterwards made the basis of scandalous accusations against her, and she was held to have instituted it for the purpose of facilitating secret assignations. When this was discovered the concerts were of course at once stopped, but by that time the mischief had been done. In

the end of August Madame de Polignac fell ill and went home for a time, and the Princesse de Lamballe immediately hurried to be with the Queen, who for once appeared really pleased to see her. Some re-awakening of their early friendship came to them, and Mercy has a story that, through sheer stupidity, the Princesse made use of it to ask for the gift of a great part of Lorraine, with an annual income of 600,000 livres, which the Queen refused. There seems little confirmation for this fable, and the Queen's affection remained for the time far tenderer towards her friend than it had been for many years.

Early in September the Princesse received news of the death of her mother at Turin. The Princesse de Savoy-Carignan, whom her daughter had never seen since her wedding-day eleven years before, was sixty-one when she died, and had been ill for a very long time. Nevertheless, the news came as a great shock to Madame de Lamballe, and she was made even more anxious by hearing that her father also suffered from very poor health. Her first impulse was to hurry to his side at once, but she resolved to wait till the Queen's child was born, after which she could remain a longer time at Turin. Marie Antoinette wrote most affectionately to her friend on this occasion :—

'I have heard with very deep sorrow, my dear Lamballe, of the death of your good Mother, for

whom you have so much tenderness and respect. I wept over your letter. I knew all the virtues of the Princesse de Carignan. My sorrow grows for you: this seems too heavy a weight for you and those you love to support. My friend, I long to see you and mingle my tears with yours, for there is no other consolation for such a grief, and I can only weep and pray to God with you. The King and I have been talking of you, and deploring the sad destiny that pursues an angel like yourself, so suited to have all happiness about her and so worthy to enjoy it. But your touching resignation supports your sorrows, and the friendship of good M. de Penthièvre and ourselves remains with you, if only that could a little soften the bitterness of your sorrow. Adieu, my dear Lamballe, I embrace you again with my whole heart, as I shall love you all my life.

MARIE ANTOINETTE.

'The King enters and wishes to add some words.'

Then, in the King's hand, follows:—

'One word, only one, Madame and dear cousin, but a word from the bottom of my heart. You know how much we both love you. May God be with you.'

CHAPTER X

1778-80

THE French court went into eleven days' mourning for the Princesse de Carignan, but Madame de Lamballe never saw her father again. After his wife's death he grew rapidly worse, and himself expired on the 6th December.

The Queen's confinement was now so imminent that all official visits of condolence to the Princesse on her father's death were put off till this great event should be over; she, as Superintendent of the Household, needing to play an important part in the ceremonies of the occasion. Her affection for her friend also kept her closely in attendance, and for nine days before the *accouchement* she slept in the Queen's bathroom, in order to be close at hand if required. The story of the birth of Madame Royale, which took place at midday on the 20th December, has been often told; how extraordinary was the excitement that prevailed, how the Prince de Lambesc's horse stood ready saddled in the courtyard that he might mount and gallop to Vienna with the news at the earliest possible moment, how at the instant of birth, accord-

ing to old-established custom, the doors were thrown open and all the crowds from the streets poured into the palace, and even into the bedchamber, till the unhappy Queen nearly died of suffocation, and the King himself burst open a window near by to give her air. The Princesse had arranged a sign with her friend by which she was to let her know the sex of the infant so soon as born, and when she heard it was a girl, Marie Antoinette swooned with disappointment, and had to be bled in the foot. Shortly after, the Princesse herself fainted, and had to be carried away. Altogether a fearful business, and one from which it is a wonder all those concerned escaped alive.

Although she would never be able to reign over France, little Marie Thérèse Charlotte, Madame Royale, was made very welcome, and great rejoicings were held over her appearance. Almost immediately after her birth, projects were made for her marriage, and the Duc de Chartres was very anxious to secure her hand for his little son, the Duc de Valois, while the Comte d'Artois was equally eager that she should be promised to his child, the little Duc d'Angoulême. Both the King and Queen favoured the latter, rather to the chagrin of the Duc de Chartres, and long years later, after many adversities, the two cousins were indeed made man and wife.

So soon as the Queen was reported to be doing well, Madame de Lamballe returned to the Hôtel de

Toulouse, where, after Mass on the 22nd December, the King paid her his state visit of condolence on her father's death, accompanied by Monsieur and Madame, the Comte d'Artois, Madame Elizabeth, and Mesdames Adélaïde, Victoire, and Sophie. The Princesse was surrounded on this occasion by her relatives, the Duc de Penthièvre, the Duc and Duchesse de Chartres, the Duc and Duchesse de Bourbon, the Prince and Princesse de Conti, and Mdlle. de Condé.

The year 1779 opened joyfully for France, with many public rejoicings over the birth and baptism of the baby princess: a hundred poor girls were portioned and married at Notre Dame, free performances were given at the theatres, and the whole royal family, accompanied by Madame de Lamballe in her official capacity, attended a service of thanksgiving at the cathedral early in February. A month later Madame de Polignac developed an attack of measles, and the Queen took it from her. She did not have the complaint badly, but naturally the court was much agitated about her, and her convalescence was a particularly troublesome period. Queen though she was, some sort of quarantine was bound to be observed, and this irked her Majesty sorely. The Princesse de Lamballe, who had had measles herself the year before, was able to be with her, and in former days this would have been all she desired; but now some more lively amusement seemed necessary to her, so she persuaded the King to allow four

of the gayest gentlemen at court to wait upon her every day. This permission determined itself into the four gentlemen in question living in her rooms from early morning till eleven at night, except for meals; and her choice fell upon the Duc de Coigny, the Duc de Guines, the Baron de Bezenval, and the Comte d'Esterhazy, all of them men of the laxest reputation. Paris dubbed them in derision 'the Queen's sick-nurses,' and the scandalous tales and ribald suggestions made about them would scarcely bear repeating. The Comte d'Artois also frequently visited his sister-in-law, and although Madame and the Princesse de Lamballe were usually supposed to be sitting with the Queen, their presence served little use in chaperonage. Of all the foolish things Marie Antoinette did in her life, this was one of the worst; and Mercy did but voice the thoughts of all who loved her when, at the end of her convalescence, he exclaimed, 'Thank heaven this vexatious time is over, and less harm come of it than might have been expected.'

The first day she was pronounced free from infection, the Queen drove into Paris, and lunched *tête-à-tête* with her beloved Comtesse de Polignac. This lady had grown somewhat alarmed lest, during her long separation from the Queen, the Princesse might have regained something of her former influence, and she quickly set herself to her old trick of insinuating unkind things against her rival. Marie Antoinette

was so glad to be free from restraint that she proved ready to believe anything, and all this year seems to have been gayer, more reckless, and more inconsiderate than ever. Somewhat disheartened, and in want of rest herself, Madame de Lamballe left court for a rather longer period than usual, going first to Bourbonne-les-Bains for the waters as a change from Plombières; and later, back to her dear Rambouillet, where, if ever, she could always find kindness and peace.

Florian, now long past pagehood, an *officier d'ordonnance* and gentleman grown, had lately returned here to become confidential secretary to his earliest friend, M. de Penthièvre, and he gives us a charming picture of the happy family party assembled at Rambouillet during this summer of 1779. Besides the Duc, the Princesse, and Florian himself, the Duchesse de Chartres and all her children had arrived—the little Duc de Valois, a sturdy child of six; the Duc de Montpensier, more delicate; and the twin baby daughters, with Madame de Genlis in attendance. There were also the Duchesse de Luynes, a lively lady who wrote comedies; Mdlle. Bagarotti, who had been celebrated in verse by Boufflers; M. d'Autier, gentleman in attendance on the Duc; and certain other ladies and gentlemen holding posts about the various guests. The life was very simple: the Duc took his chocolate at nine, then rose and went out, keeping in the open air as long as possible; and

all staying there did much the same; but the company was cultured and interesting, conversation centring much upon the children, and the best methods of education for them. Madame de Genlis (whom the Baronne d'Oberkirch describes as beautiful, intellectual, and pedantic, and who was caricatured at the time holding a piece of barley-sugar and a rod) had already been intrusted by the Duc with the chief charge of his children's bringing-up, and although the Duchesse could not force herself to approve of all her ideas, or indeed wholly of Madame herself, she was loth so far to interfere with her husband's wishes. Madame de Genlis had very modern notions concerning children and the proper method of rendering them strong and self-reliant, insisted on giving them hard beds, plain food, and plenty of bodily exercise—even putting lead on little Valois' boots and making him walk for miles. He was a strong boy to start with, and it suited him; she lived to see him King of the French before she died; but little Montpensier was sickly and delicate, and the tender mother's heart of the Duchesse trembled lest the Governess should essay the same methods upon him. For a long time he would not walk at all, but Madame de Genlis determined to make him, and succeeded. She had a room covered with mattresses, so that falls could not hurt him, took him into it alone, and would not let him out till he had overcome his fears. The Duchesse de Luynes was immensely taken with Madame de Genlis'

ideas, and resolved to try them on her own grandson, of whom she had sole charge. This she afterwards did, and the poor child grew up in a room which was little more than a cell; it did not, however, ruin his constitution, since he lived till 1868. Florian was a great admirer of Voltaire, and Madame de Genlis not; they had many interesting discussions on the subject. He also admired Cervantes, and had ideas of his own concerning the simultaneous teaching of history and geography to children, all of which provoked much interesting and stimulating talk.

The Duchesse de Chartres herself had long since ceased to care for anything but her children; she was again expecting to be confined in about a month's time, and spoke so often of a poor woman she had seen lately who had borne triplets, that Madame de Genlis sarcastically hoped she might do the same, and the Duchesse honestly and heartily echoed her wish. This was not to be, however, and a third son, the Comte de Beaujolais, was born to her in October. M. de Penthièvre adored children equally with his daughter. Later, when the twins were at school at the Convent of Belle Chasse, he would go five or six times a year to see them, and always take them toys or presents; while their other grandfather, d'Orléans, never went near them. The Vicomte d'Autier, described as 'a worthy man, but dreadfully melancholy and dull,' had a charming little daughter of seven years named Henriette, and of this '*petite Anniette*'

the Duc made a great pet, spoiling her till her mother, the good Vicomtesse, grew quite doubtful as to her future. There was a statue of a little chimney-sweep with a basket on his back in the hall of the castle, and every morning a fresh toy appeared in this basket for the delighted child. Of course there were quarrels with the other children, and one day at table little Valois took the place of Anniette, who promptly began to cry. 'You are more reasonable than she,' said the Duc gravely to his grandson; 'you will give it up to her.' And another time, seeing the elderly prince and the small child romping together on the stairs, the Princesse de Lamballe cried, laughing, 'I don't know what you will do when she grows up, but I really believe you will marry her!' Little Anniette afterwards became the Marquise de Chantérac.

From this life of simplicity and kindness the Princesse returned in the middle of October to her duties at Versailles. She was coldly received, 'with total loss of favour,' Mercy says. 'She is an object of annoyance and embarrassment to every one, and no one pays any attention to her.' Madame de Polignac had also been away, at Spa, but had returned earlier than her rival, and shortly after accompanied the Queen to Marly. The Princesse was half doubtful whether to follow, but finally did so, only to find everything very dull, the Queen always shut up with Madame de Polignac, and the other ladies of the court declaring that it was not of the slightest use

for them to be in attendance at all, as there was nothing for them to do. The Princesse, who was never of energetic habits, spent most of her time in her own room, and her enemies took advantage of this seclusion to spread about a wicked tale that she was *enceinte*, which it is even said the Queen was induced to believe. So soon as she heard of it, the Princesse indignantly made a point of showing herself everywhere, and riding on horseback as often as possible, in order to refute the calumny. In a kind of desperation, too, she took to giving gay card-parties, hoping the Queen might attend them, and it is said the Duc de Chartres lost as much as 800 louis one evening in November at her table.

The Comtesse de Polignac now found herself so indispensable to the Queen that she was able to make her own terms for her society, and, tired of living in small rooms in the palace, announced that it was necessary to her health to reside in her own house in Paris, whither she at once proceeded. The Queen and court in consequence moved to Versailles, and every morning Marie Antoinette drove in to visit and lunch with her favourite. Her feeling for the Comtesse does indeed at this time appear to have been an absolute infatuation. The following summer Madame de Polignac gave birth to a son, and for the few months before, the Queen hardly ever left her. She insisted on moving the court to La Muette for ten days that she might be nearer, would have no proper

meals, but arrived at her friend's house at ten o'clock every morning, took a glass of milk with her, and spent the whole day by her bedside, even inducing the King to pay her a private visit, an honour he had never before conferred upon any subject. When the court returned to Versailles, the Queen was only able to see her favourite twice a week; but they were soon happily reunited at Trianon, and not long after Comte Jules de Polignac was created a Duc, and his wife 'took the *tabouret.*' One almost wonders why this distinction had not been conferred upon them before, but, to do her justice, the Comtesse seems to have cared very little about rank, and probably it was only granted now in consequence of the marriage of her daughter this summer to the Duc de Guiche. The child—for she was no more, and indeed became a mother at fourteen—received 800,000 livres dowry from the Queen, and a great many more of her parents' debts were also paid to make things pleasant on such an auspicious occasion; but the money the Duc and Duchesse de Polignac thus obtained did not nearly cover all that they owed.

Remembering the simple pleasures of that happy summer among the children at Rambouillet, the Princesse must often have regretted her own childlessness. She was now past thirty, and though it is scarcely true to say of her that since her marriage she 'had had nothing but tears to shed,' she had certainly suffered her full share of sorrow, neglect, and disillu-

sion. But in the autumn of 1779 her lady-in-waiting, Mdlle. de Guébriant, afterwards Madame de Las Cases, introduced to her notice a young cousin of her own, Mdlle. Béatrix Étiennette d'Amblimont, to whom the Princesse took an immediate liking, offering her a post in her household, and treating her henceforth almost as her own child. Since this Mdlle. d'Amblimont, or Madame de Lâge as she shortly afterwards became, was much about the Princesse during her later years, some words of explanation concerning her may be useful. She was at this time about sixteen, and very pretty; like most people born towards the end of April, of a warm and energetic character, a good lover, a good hater, and given to outspoken remarks concerning anything that came into her head. She adored the Princesse, but was never slow to criticise any action of hers of which she did not approve. 'It will be an honour,' she exclaims to a correspondent, 'to say in my old age that I belonged to the household of the Duc de Penthièvre'; but 'our neighbouring palace will not be so glorious.' The neighbouring palace was the Palais Royal, where Chartres and his father Orléans were already winning looks askance by their odd and disloyal actions. Letters of the Princesse de Lamballe are not easy to come by, since she wrote few, and those addressed to the Queen, Marie Antoinette later destroyed lest they should compromise the writer; but Étiennette d'Amblimont kept some,

written in the Princesse's tiny straight hand, so uniform as to be almost illegible, and reproduced them long after in her most interesting *Souvenirs d'Émigration.* Here is one, written evidently early in their acquaintance, when Mdlle. d'Amblimont was apparently under some treatment for her eyes :—

'*Wednesday.*

'I could not write to you, my dear child; you know I cannot always do all I wish. I write to you before another attack, so as not to fail again; and tell you that your little note charmed me. All the same I forbid you to write; you must be careful of your eyes. I don't want my child to lose her pretty eyes, and I want her to keep very quiet. Patience, that will make you strong again. Your three weeks will be over on Sunday, and I shall make a point of going to see you one of the first days. Adieu, dear little one, I have been very worried about you, but I do not love you any the less, with all my heart. I shall have plenty of things to tell you, but I must live on expectation. I limit myself to asking you to take care of yourself, if you love me a little.'

So fond was the Princesse of Étiennette that the girl's own mother grew jealous, particularly when, a year or two later, Madame de Lamballe wished to arrange a marriage for her with the young Comte de Lâge de Volude, a naval officer, whom she had known since his childhood, but who possessed no great for-

tune. The Comte and Comtesse d'Amblimont thought their daughter might do better, but the Princesse had had sufficient experience of unhappy marriages to feel character of more importance than wealth, and she knew that of the young sailor to be irreproachable. Nevertheless, she was obliged for a time to drop her interest in the matter, though resolved to carry it through at some later date.

During the summer and early autumn of 1780 Madame de Polignac again incited the Queen to wild and foolish doings. The latest amusement was acting; and plays which had been rash enough long ago, when merely presented to the family and acted by princesses, became more than unwise when the Queen took part in them, and, requiring a larger audience, admitted the gentlemen of the guard to look on. The chief parts were always taken by Marie Antoinette and her favourite, neither of whom could act well, and the performance merely made the spectators smile, and diminished the respect in which they should have held their sovereign. Admittance to these festivities was very arbitrary, and Madame de Polignac one day induced the Queen to refuse it to Madame de Lamballe, whose rank as Superintendent of the Household alone should of course have given her the right to be present, even if friendship denied it: needless to say this incident wounded her very deeply. It was merely thoughtlessness on Marie Antoinette's part, no doubt, but Madame de Polignac knew well the

consequences of what she asked. In October Mercy notes that 'the Princesse is very little seen at court. The Queen, it is true, visited her on her father's death, but it is the first mark of kindness she has received for long.' This is the last time the Princesse is mentioned in Mercy's correspondence, since shortly after he resigned his ambassadorship and retired into private life.

The poor lady had indeed much to trouble her. Early in November her eldest brother died, Prince Victor of Savoy-Carignan, he who had stood proxy for her husband at the marriage, and to whom she had always been greatly attached. He was succeeded by his son, Charles Emmanuel; but even this loss was not so great a trial to her as the worry she had been enduring all this year concerning the affairs of her other brother Eugène, he for whom a commission had been found in the French army, and who was known as the Comte de Villefranche. She does not seem to have seen nearly so much of Eugène as she had anticipated when it had been arranged that he should remain in France, for he had been quartered at Granville, Pontorson, Avranches, and various places rather beyond her neighbourhood; but she had always cherished a great affection for him, and was deeply distressed when she learned that he had made a rash and highly unsuitable marriage. The lady was a Mdlle. Elizabeth Anne Magon de Boisgarein, and though nothing was said against her character,

her people were but respectable *bourgeoisie* of St. Malo, where the Savoy-Carignan regiment was at that time settled; while the Comte de Villefranche had been treated almost as a French Prince of the Blood. The King of Sardinia was furious, at first pronouncing that Eugène should be disinherited; but he afterwards relented from this, only on the condition that his inheritance should not pass to his children. The marriage actually took place—in great haste—on December 27, 1779, but it does not seem to have immediately transpired, for in spite of the indignation it aroused among the young Prince's relatives, no action was taken with regard to it till the following September, when, some formal irregularity in the ceremony having been discovered, Parliament declared the marriage annulled. Now comes the extraordinary part of the affair. Louis XVI., whose usual good nature had given way to the sharpest anger, and whose first impulse had been to deprive Eugène of his commission and order him to leave France, now that the marriage was really dissolved, not only wished, but insisted, that it should be re-solemnised with every necessary legality as soon as possible, and in February 1781 this was done; Mdlle. Magon being recognised as the Prince's wife, though known only as the Comtesse de Pommeryt. One son was born from this union, of which the Carignan family, though still very angry, had to make the best it could; but the relations

between the Princesse de Lamballe and her favourite brother remained unhappily strained till the close of his life.

Marie Antoinette paid her friend a short and frigid visit of condolence on the death of her brother, spent 'a few moments' with her, and hurried away to amuse herself; but when, on the 29th November, her own mother died, she was sobered at once, and glad to fall back upon that affection which never yet had failed her. The great Empress's cry to her daughter on her early accession to the crown of France had been, 'Change nothing.' Marie Antoinette had changed all. Yet the disaster already looming on her horizon might not really have been long postponed however wise a course she had chosen; and Maria Theresa at least saw her child a mother—if not her dearest wish, the mother of a Dauphin—before her death. The Queen seems to have been deeply affected by her mother's death, and shut herself up alone with the Princesse de Lamballe and the Duchesse de Polignac during the chief part of the winter. As usual at rare periods of sorrow, the rather callous witticisms of the Duchesse jarred upon her; and once again, for a brief time, she turned to the ever faithful heart of her earliest friend. Suddenly sensible of the immense favours she had heaped upon the Polignacs, and her late neglect of the Princesse, she arranged that a further sum of 40,000 livres should be added to the income of

Madame de Lamballe, whose charities were increasing every year: nor did this addition bring her revenue within a long way of the enormous sums the Polignacs took, used, and used entirely upon themselves.

CHAPTER XI

1780-5

One of the most curious incidents of this period in France was the immense and fashionable interest taken in Freemasonry. Most of the innumerable lodges springing up throughout the country and especially in Paris were, it is true, mere cloaks for the revolutionary sentiments and talk already rife among certain classes of the people; but others, and ostensibly all, managed to do a great deal of good among the poor, providing schools and almshouses, dowering maidens, succouring prisoners, and promoting general friendliness; while at the same time amusing themselves with harmless little secret rites and meetings. Nearly all the chief men in France were members, and strange though it appears, many of the women too: for Sisters as well as Brothers were admitted to the Lodges of Adoption, and certain of the Lodges were managed entirely by ladies. The Duc de Chartres was particularly interested in Freemasonry, and had succeeded the Comte de Clermont as Grand Master some years before; while his sister the Duchesse de Bourbon was Grand

Mistress of the Lodge of St. Jean de la Candeur, founded in 1775: and he easily persuaded his wife and the Princesse de Lamballe also to become Sisters. These mixed meetings seem to have been very ordinary evening parties, with dancing or a theatrical performance: the guests were perhaps received under crossed swords, or greeted in (very bad) rhyme: there were toasts, and a book signed, and after the new Sister had been received, there was little to distinguish the assembly from any other fashionable *soirée.* Madame de Lamballe had been affiliated on February 12, 1777, and she paid several visits to the lodge after, sometimes signing herself *Sœur Princesse de Lamballe,* and sometimes her usual signature, *M. T. L. de Savoye.*

At the ceremony of Adoption, some regular (that is, male) members must be present; and the new Sister took vows to listen, obey, work, and be silent. There was a proper costume for the occasion, a white dress, white leather apron bordered with blue silk, and white gloves, the cost of which the Sister defrayed herself. She also wore a white satin garter bordered with blue, on which was written, 'Silence and Virtue,' on her left arm; and a blue moiré ribbon with a flaming heart and an apple embroidered on it across her breast. All fines and collections made were given to the poor. In January 1781 a further honour was offered to the Princesse de Lamballe: she was made Grand Mistress of the Scottish

Lodge, which was the head of all the Lodges of Adoption; and in the end of February her installation took place. Lauzun rather sneeringly tells how all her little court played at the Mason Mysteries: Madame de Soyecourt representing Her Most Serene Highness the Grand Mistress, Madame de Tolozan the Inspectress, Madame de Bouillé the Speaker, Madame de Montalembert the Secretary, Madame d'Hinnisdal the Chancelloress, Madame de Lostange and Madame de Boynes the Almoners, Madame de Berc the Chief Mistress of the Ceremonies, and Madame de Lascases the Terrible Sister. So universal was the interest in Freemasonry that the Queen herself, though not belonging to the society, asked the Princesse often of it; and later this same year there is a letter extant from her in which, writing with unaccustomed tenderness, she says:—

'I see that you still care for me, my dear Lamballe; it is such a pleasure to me to see your dear handwriting that I do not know how I can repay you. I am glad you are well, but one must not flatter oneself for nothing, if you continue to watch as you do over M. de Penthièvre. His indisposition distresses the King much, and he is sending his own physician with orders to stay with you if there is any danger: I shall be very sad as long as I have no news of the crisis. As soon as you return and take

up your charge, we will finish all business attaching to the acts of benefaction which should follow my *accouchement.* I have read with interest what has been done in the Masonic Lodges over which you presided at the commencement of the year, and about which you amused me so. . . . I see that they do not only sing pretty songs, but that they also do good. Your Lodges have followed in our steps by delivering prisoners, and marrying young women. That will not prevent you from dowering ours, and placing the children who are on our list: the *protégées* of good M. de Penthièvre shall be the first thought of, and I wish to be godmother to the first child of the little Antoinette. I was quite affected by a letter from her mother which Elizabeth showed me, for Elizabeth protects her also. I do not think it would be possible to write with more sentiment and religion. In those classes there are hidden virtues; honest hearts open to the highest Christian feelings; let us think how to distinguish them. I shall charge the Abbé to work to discover them, and we shall try to obtain from God good health for M. de Penthièvre. Adieu, my dear heart, I embrace you with all my heart and await your letter.

MARIE ANTOINETTE.'

The Queen's sister, the Archduchess Marie Christine, tried, and as we now know with some reason, to frighten her concerning the enormous growth of

Freemasonry, but Marie Antoinette only replied, 'Every one belongs to it, so all that goes on there is known, and where can the danger be?' Lady Masons continued to be fashionable in France for many years, and even the Empress Josephine was Grand Mistress of a Lodge of Adoption.

On the 22nd October 1781 France was made happy by the birth of a Dauphin. More order was kept in the Queen's room on this occasion, and though the royal family and members of the household were present, the riff-raff of the streets was not admitted. Madame de Lamballe was of course there in her official position, but not the Duchesse de Polignac. Strict injunctions were given that no one was to tell the Queen of the child's sex, but the King was so delighted to find himself the father of a son that he himself broke the rule, from which lapse happily no ill effects followed. The Queen recovered quickly, and there was much gaiety at court all that winter. Madame d'Artois was ill at the New Year, and it was not till the 11th January that the Princesse de Lamballe sent her formal good wishes to the King and Queen, pleading as an excuse that she had been anxious about her cousin. On the 12th, however, she gave a great ball, at which the King was present; earlier still, she and her father-in-law (now somewhat recovered from his illness) had stood godparents at the Hôtel de Toulouse to the little daughter of the Marquis de Mordant de Massiac, and on the

16th she took prominent part in the wedding of her favourite maid of honour, Étiennette d'Amblimont, to the young Comte de Lâge de Volude, a marriage which she had long been anxious to bring about. It will be remembered that the Comte and Comtesse d'Amblimont considered the suitor of scarcely sufficient fortune to aspire to their daughter, but finding the stern parents quite ready to contradict one another, the Princesse exercised her diplomacy in taking each apart separately and pointing out the advantages of the alliance 'if only, alas! Monsieur your husband (or Madame your wife) were not so set against it.' The ruse worked like magic, for each was determined not to let the other have his or her own way, and Étiennette was happily married to her young Comte amid great rejoicings on January 16th, as the Comtesse de Lâge hereafter playing a constant part in the fortunes of her Princesse. In anticipation it may be said that Madame de Lamballe was justified of her foresight in the marriage, which turned out a happy one, and three charming little girls were born of it; to the eldest of whom the Princesse and the Duc de Penthièvre stood godparents at a crowded christening party at the Hôtel de Toulouse exactly a year later.

On the 20th January the Comtesse de Lâge was presented at court on her marriage; and the same day saw the presentation of a certain young Madame de Ginestous, daughter of the Genovese Minister at

London and Madrid, also on her marriage, and also a lady-in-waiting to the Princesse de Lamballe. Of her, too, more will be heard later. On the 21st January the Queen, accompanied by the Superintendent of her Household, went in state from La Muette to give thanks at Notre Dame and St. Geneviève; then proceeding to a banquet at the Hôtel de Ville, of which seventy persons partook; and so, after witnessing the illumination of the city, home. At this banquet, where Madame de Lamballe was seated next to Madame Adélaïde, a Rhine carp had been procured expressly for the King at the cost of four thousand francs; he ate one mouthful of it, but said it was tough, and sent it away. It was not correct for any man to eat at the King's table; and though this rule was waived in favour of his two brothers, all the other Princes of the Blood were served apart, and complained after that the King ate so fast and rose so soon that they had had time for nothing but radishes and butter. Nevertheless, seventy-eight dishes were served at the King's table, and it was reckoned that 102,000 francs had been expended on butcher's meat alone.

On the 22nd the Queen and court dined with the Comte d'Artois at his residence in the Temple, a place which by some strange anticipation she always hated and often begged to have destroyed; and anxious now as ever to escape from it, she insisted on taking Madame de Lamballe and thirty-nine other

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ladies on with her to a great ball being given at the Hôtel de Ville, at which the King was present, but where she herself was not expected. On this occasion she made no attempt at disguise and carried her mask on her arm; but though loudly greeted, the crowd was great and none too courtly, and she might have been crushed to death had not the King pushed hard with his elbows and made a way for her to withdraw. All this could never have happened in a former reign, but no one seems to have realised how quickly the populace was losing its respect for royalty, very greatly owing to the Queen's own unconventionality and ill-judged condescension. Another instance of this occurred on the 30th, when the King's Guard gave a great ball in the Opera Hall at Versailles; to which Marie Antoinette went, and danced herself with one of the privates. They were all of course of good family, but mischief was done by it all the same. Madame de Lamballe accompanied her to this ball, though very anxious at the time about her sister-in-law, who, with her two little daughters, lay seriously ill with measles. The Duchesse herself recovered, but one of the twins died on February 6th.

In the spring of 1782, the Grand Duke and Duchess Paul of Russia arrived on an incognito visit to Paris, travelling as the Comte and Comtesse de Nord: and in their train came the Baronne d'Oberkirch, from whose pleasant and charming memoirs many interest-

ing descriptions of the men and women of the time have been drawn. The Baronne kept a careful record of all the entertainments offered to her Comte and Comtesse, and gives an enthusiastic account of a day spent at Sceaux in the end of May, when the Princesse de Lamballe and the Duchesse de Chartres assisted the Duc de Penthièvre to receive his noble guests. The weather was lovely, says Madame d'Oberkirch, and the beauty of the gardens beyond all praise; the party walked, drove, ate, and found the hours all too short for their enjoyment. A week later she describes a delightful supper given by the Princesse de Lamballe after the court ball. The company was small and very select, but all the royal family were present, and even the King came in for a few minutes. Lotto, a very fashionable game then, was played for some time, and much money lost; afterwards, the guests danced, the Queen taking part in the quadrilles, and the party did not break up till four o'clock in the morning. 'Beyond comparison the court is gayer than formerly,' sums up the Baronne.

For the remainder of this year, after the departure of the Nords, we hear very little of the Princesse. Early in August she and M. de Penthièvre both sustained a great loss in the death of the Duc's almoner, M. de Tascher; late in September she was inoculated at Passy: in December she presented her lady of honour the Marquise de Las Cases: and on the last

day of the year, anxious to hear Garat, the new musician, she told the Abbé Estagnac, who had discovered him, that she would come to his house for the purpose. A good deal of talk was caused by the poor Abbé, in his wish to do her honour, engaging the Hôtel des Invalides for the recital instead, and having his cousin, a good homely *bourgeoise* Madame Gilibert, to receive the distinguished guest; but we may be sure the Princesse was amiable and charming as ever to the poor flustered lady. Madame de Lamballe took always a deep interest in any young persons of promise, and it is therefore somewhat remarkable to note the omission of her name the preceding August, when Florian, her particular *protégé*, received the prize before a great audience for his 'Dialogue between Voltaire and a Serf of the Jura Mountains.' In September 1782 great changes obtained in the Queen's Household, in consequence of the sensational bankruptcy of the Prince and Princesse de Guéméné for thirty-three millions. An element of nobility may be found in some failures, but here was none; all had been sheer greed and ruin; thousands suffered by their recklessness, and it was felt highly unfortunate that Madame de Guéméné should—at one time at least—have been an intimate friend of the Queen's, for whom she had indeed made many and dangerous enemies. The defaulting Prince and Princesse had of course to resign the posts they held about the court, and the important position of

Governess to the royal children was immediately granted by the Queen to the Duchesse de Polignac. The appointment was a foregone conclusion, but seems to have given satisfaction to no one. Marie Antoinette, it is said, would really have preferred Madame de Duras, her *dame d'atours*, and Madame de Polignac was greatly bored with her new duties, which she constantly neglected; although she would have been deeply offended had the post been offered to any one else. On the plea of ill-health she constantly absented herself from court, and in order to conceal her neglect, the Queen was often obliged to take charge of, and even teach, her children herself.

The year 1783 was again spent very quietly by the Princesse de Lamballe. She gave her usual winter ball at Versailles on the 11th January; and early in February purchased a house at Passy from the Duchesse de Luynes for one hundred and ten thousand livres; but apparently somewhat anxious about the Duc de Penthièvre, whose health had been failing rapidly of late, spent most of her time at his side. In a little note written to Madame de Lâge about now, she says, 'I have done all I can, my dear child, to read your sister's letter, but I could not get to the end of it; certainly her handwriting does not resemble her pretty fingers! I should be very dull here if I were not with M. de Penthièvre, who treats me always with an ever increasing kindness. . . . I devour books and letters, and have run through all

this little library. The *Contes* of Marmontel seemed to me very dull.' She seems to have read much about now, and Étiennette de Lâge tells how often the good Duc, on his way to the castle chapel, would come upon her and her mistress deep in some moving romance, and shaking his head kindly, would call them 'frivolous little people, who were young now, but would some day read something better.'

Louis XVI. was usually an unselfish man, but in the autumn of this year he did a very selfish thing. Possessing few enthusiasms, he, like all his race, had a perfect passion for hunting; and long had he cast envious eyes upon the fair parks and forests of Rambouillet. It seems there was some idea that Louis XIV. wished the estate to revert to his legitimate descendants by purchase if they desired it; but when the suggestion was first made to the Duc de Penthièvre, he was very loth to consider it. He possessed many other castles, it is true; but Rambouillet stood far the dearest to him: his father had died there; he himself had been born and married there; his children born and buried there; it held too the tombs of his parents and his wife; he was approaching old age, and had hoped himself to die and lie there with his kin. Nevertheless, the King persisted, saying that the 'possession of Rambouillet would bring gladness into his life.' 'Then, sire,' said the fine old Duc, 'it is no longer mine. Permit me merely to remove my bones and my poor.' The

estate was valued by experts at sixteen million livres, which sum was paid in December 1783 to the Duc, who with it bought another castle at Châteauneuf-sur-Loire, near Orleans: the contract was signed by him at Sceaux. He had left his beloved home the preceding July, and only returned in November with the Princesse de Lamballe and the faithful Florian to fetch the coffins of his family, and carry them to Dreux Cathedral, where they were reinterred,—a melancholy errand. There were nine coffins, those of the Comte and Comtesse de Toulouse, the Duc's parents; of his wife the late Duchesse de Penthièvre; his son, the Prince de Lamballe; and five other children who had died in infancy. The sad procession was met and accompanied by crowds of weeping villagers, who sorrowed, as they well might, for the departure of their good master. The Duc removed his almshouses to his new neighbourhood, and never saw Rambouillet again.

After a retired winter, we find the Princesse again at court for Easter, when it was always her duty to attend the Queen to her Easter Communion, and hold the napkin for her while she took the Sacrament. On Good Friday the Queen washed the hands of twelve poor girls, and, assisted by Madame Elizabeth and the Princesse de Lamballe, waited upon them afterwards at table. Madame Elizabeth was twenty now, a grave, religious-minded girl, usually silent, but with a surprisingly firm and energetic character on

occasions: she had always wished to enter a convent, but in deference to the King's wishes, promised to wait till she was thirty before taking such a step. Yet her eldest brother was not her favourite, and though throughout the Revolution she remained at the post of danger till her death, her sympathies were always rather with M. de Provence and the exiles.

In the summer of 1784 another distinguished royal guest, the King of Sweden, arrived in Paris; and spent some six weeks there in great enjoyment, under the title of the Comte de Haga. Gustavus III. loved France and all things French; but perhaps of all the French aristocracy he, a true king of romance, had the greatest admiration and regard for the Duc de Penthièvre and the Princesse de Lamballe. His last visit had been to Turin; and the very day after his arrival in Paris, he appeared without any warning in Madame de Lamballe's ante-room, charged with all sorts of affectionate messages from her family. She was surprised, but delighted to receive him, and he was shown apparently into her bedroom; but, as he insisted on the strict observance of his incognito, he was a very easy guest to entertain. He asked for M. de Penthièvre, and the Princesse sent to inform him, pulling forward ordinary chairs herself; but when the Duc entered, he more punctiliously offered an armchair to the King. 'Not for the Comte de Haga,' replied Gustavus; to whom M. de Penthièvre

then presented his gentlemen in attendance, and they all stayed chatting pleasantly for some time. When the King went, both doors were ceremoniously thrown open, but he would not permit his host to come down to the door with him, and even M. d'Autier was stopped half way. The visit was returned and repeated several times; and Gustavus showed his real affection for his pretty hostess many years later when he proved a true friend to her in her time of saddest distress.

Many balls, operas, *fêtes*, and entertainments of every description were given in honour of the Swedish King, but perhaps the most original was an exhibition of ballooning, then quite a new and very fashionable discovery. The year before, M. de Montgolfier had sent up a *Globe aérostatique* at Versailles in the presence of the King and court, attaching to it a basket containing a live lamb, cock, and duck, to prove if it were possible for animals to live in the superior air. In twenty minutes the balloon had disappeared, but a few hours later, news arrived that it had descended in the wood of Vaucresson, half a league from its place of departure; and when found, the basket had been broken off, but the lamb, cock, and duck, apparently not a whit the worse, were busily engaged in finding their dinner close by. The King and royal family were much struck with this experiment; and a month later, the Marquis d'Arlande and M. Pilatre de Rozier

themselves ascended, 'majestically,' to the height of 250 feet, when the 'intrepid voyagers' took off their hats and waved them, saluting the spectators beneath. Immense interest was created in the new possibility, and the King gave the Messrs. Montgolfier letters of nobility and a grant of 400,000 livres in order to perfect the discovery: while the Princesse de Lamballe presided at a solemn banquet held at the *Loge Candeur*, when a laurel wreath was given to the Montgolfiers, and a medal to an obscure but heroic pensioner. Benjamin Franklin, in France at the time, witnessed one of these ascensions, and was asked to point out the good of the discovery, to which he replied that 'it was still in its infancy as yet, but like any other child might grow into either a beast or a man of wit.' So novel an exhibition was naturally put in use to amuse the Comte de Haga; and Madame de Lamballe made one of a brilliant gathering at Versailles on the 23rd June, when at exactly a quarter to five, a balloon was sent up in his honour. The Duc de Chartres was also much interested in ballooning, and had a balloon made for him by the Roberts brothers, in which rumour chose to suggest that he took his sister-in-law up, and they dined together after at Villers-Cotterets. But rumour already began to make free with great names at court, and where no scandal could be found, to invent it.

In August arrived another Prince, Henry, brother

to the King of Prussia, travelling as the Comte d'Oels; and him also M. de Penthièvre entertained at his castle at Anet: but for the remainder of the year one hardly finds Madame de Lamballe's name mentioned at any of the court festivities. Her health had for long been very indifferent; and receiving no very warm welcome at Versailles, she preferred to remain in the quiet of the country as much as possible with her beloved father-in-law. A note from the Queen, written shortly before this, is almost cruel in its brevity and coldness: 'I only reply to you to prove my affection,' she says, 'for I am overwhelmed with audiences and business.' And Polignacs, one might add: for already it was whispered that the Queen grew vexed at times with the careless familiarities of the Duchesse, who yet nevertheless retained such an ascendency over her that she could not bear to be parted from her. Yet not so would she once have written to her earliest friend. Well has Lescure named Madame de Lamballe and Count Fersen the 'courtiers of sorrow': little mentioned in the days of brilliance, but constant and faithful through the nights of storm.

In November 1784, Florian, now becoming a recognised poet, dedicated his *Six Nouvelles* to the Princesse in the following graceful verse:—

> 'Princesse, pardonnez, en lisant cet ouvrage,
> Si vous y retrouvez, crayonnés par ma main,
> Les traits charmants de votre image:
> J'ai voulu de mon livre assurer le destin.

Pour embellir les héroïnes,
A l'une j'ai donné votre aimable candeur,
A l'autre ce regard, ce sourire enchanteur,
Ces grâces à la fois et naïves et fines.
Ainsi, partageant vos attraits,
Entre ma Célestine, Elvire et Félicie,
Il a suffit d'un de vos traits
Pour que chacune fût jolie.'

Just about Christmas, when the Duc and the Princesse had returned to Paris, and were staying at the Hôtel de Toulouse, a dangerous fire broke out one night in the Princesse's room which might have had very serious consequences. She was retiring to bed at one o'clock in the early morning of the 24th December, when a strong smell of burning was noticed, and almost immediately after, flames burst out from the wainscoting in the ante-chamber to her bedroom. Hurrying herself to rouse the Duc, her attendants at once gave the alarm, and the fire was quickly mastered, but not before the news had spread across to the Palais Royal, where the Duchesse de Chartres, already undressing, with a shriek of '*O mon Dieu!* My father!' flew downstairs before she could be stopped, and half dressed, ran through the snowy courtyard to the Hôtel de Toulouse, where she threw herself into the arms of M. de Penthièvre. Many and kind inquiries were made the following day. The fire was ultimately traced to a man named Poulailler, who had assassinated a keeper, and for whose arrest the Duc had offered a reward

of 100 louis. He had already three times set fire to the Duc's forests in revenge; but was not captured till the following July, when he was hung for other crimes.

The year 1785 found Madame de Lamballe still in the most wretched of health. In February she bought the Hôtel Louvois for her stables, at a cost of 100,000 livres. On the 27th March the Queen gave birth to a second son, the Duc de Normandie, and the Princesse attended her then, and at Easter: taking an official part too in May in the public celebrations of the event, when she received her Majesty at Notre Dame on the 23rd. Two days later, the Queen dined with her in Paris, before going to the Comédie Italienne, and was shocked to find in how nervous and depressed a state she was. The waters she was accustomed to take had ceased to do her any good: she had tried every possible remedy without avail, and had even been persuaded to consult Deslon, a pupil of Mesmer, who had a great vogue in Paris that year, but who was regarded somewhat as a quack and a charlatan, and into whose proceedings the King had been advised to appoint a commission. Deslon, however, was of no use, and the Comte d'Artois recommended the Princesse his own physician, Dr. Saiffert, whom she seems to have liked, since she retained his services after, though we find no immediate improvement in her health. Marie Antoinette was particularly distressed concerning her, since she

knew, though the Princesse did not, that her brother Eugène, the Comte de Villefranche, lay seriously ill at his castle of Domart on the Luce near Amiens; and she wrote privately to Étiennette de Lâge begging her to keep this news from her mistress as long as possible. The advice was no doubt kindly meant, but the Princesse's grief was but all the greater when, on the 30th June, she heard merely of her brother's death, and reflected that she had never been wholly reconciled to him since his unfortunate marriage. Already ill and worried, her self-reproaches plunged her for the time into the deepest melancholy. The Queen came again to condole with her, and the court went into mourning for three days for this young prince, who, aged thirty-two, had died of a quinsy at Domart, where he was buried. His regiment was given to the Duc d'Angoulême, the Comte d'Artois' young son. He left one son, Joseph Marie, not yet four years old, whom the King gave in guardianship to the Baron de Breteuil, and who was afterwards known as the Chevalier de Savoy. This young man and his mother remained in France, living very obscurely, throughout the Revolution; after which the mother wrote to Napoleon, imploring a post in the army for her son, which the Emperor granted.

CHAPTER XII

1785-9

In the summer of 1785 the first open blow was struck at the position and fair fame of Marie Antoinette. The extraordinary confusion which surrounds every incident of the Diamond Necklace story has already called forth volumes of explanation, and it is not proposed to add anything to it here: the Queen was quite innocent of all complicity in the disgraceful business, but unfortunately she had not prepared the way for her people to place implicit trust in her word against adverse evidence. They knew much that was true concerning her frivolity and extravagance, and were prepared to believe any further accusations against her. Even her natural charity towards the wretched woman Lamotte, who had so injured her, was but regarded as proof positive that Lamotte had been the Queen's accomplice. The trial dragged on for a year, and Marie Antoinette's character changed utterly under the strain. She became grave and sad, distrustful of many whom she had trusted too much before; and she never cared to wear jewels or gay dresses again.

Enemies were indeed growing thick about her, and one of the deadliest was the Duc de Chartres, on his father's death in November of this year, the Duc d'Orléans. Once handsome and polished, evil living had destroyed this man, alike in looks, manners, and morals. His face was covered with carbuncles, his hair falling off, his senses stupefied; he 'lived,' says Carlyle, 'in dull smoke and ashes of outburnt sensualities': 'in him confusion sits bottled.' Something might perhaps have been made of him had fortune and his own nature been kind, but his best impulses were checked; the King never trusted him; the court party opposed his promotion in the navy; and the Queen, who had at first been partial to him, later imprudently turned her sharp wit to ridiculing him, and this insult he never forgave. He possessed much property, and three of his houses he let, besides allowing shops to be built on the ground floor of his own palace, an economy that brought him many sneers. 'We hardly ever see you here on Sundays now,' said Marie Antoinette: 'but I suppose you are keeping shop.' It is hardly to be wondered at, perhaps, that he avoided Versailles, and that the Palais Royal became known as a refuge for the discontented and the disloyal: being a Prince of the Blood, no messenger of the law could enter his residence, and it grew a veritable meeting-place for conspirators. The Duc de Lauzun and Madame de Coigny affected his society, and it became almost fashionable

to be anti-court. So difficult was it in fact to find suitable company for the Queen to meet, that she complained bitterly several times to the Duchesse de Polignac of the people she encountered even in her rooms; and Madame de Polignac so far forgot herself and the kindnesses she had received as to reply that if the Queen did not care about her guests there was no necessity for her to honour her parties. The Duchesse had never felt any real affection for the Queen, and now that her favour no longer meant popularity, took little pains to preserve it; but all through the tragic worries of the long trial of the necklace, it is said that Marie Antoinette cared more and sorrowed deeper over her disappointment in her favourite than over any loss of credit to herself.

From July 1785 to May 1786, the Princesse de Lamballe's name is not mentioned at any of the court festivities; the Duchesses de Luxembourg and de Luynes attended the Queen at her Easter Communion; and the Princesse de Chimay was with her when her little daughter Sophie was born. It is evident that Madame de Lamballe left town immediately after her brother's death, and that her ill-health would not permit her to fulfil any of her accustomed duties for some time. From the 11th May to the 17th June, however, the Archduke Ferdinand and his wife, Marie Beatrice d'Este, visited Paris as the Comte and Comtesse de Nettembourg; and on the 24th May they were entertained at a

great dinner at Sceaux by the Duc de Penthièvre. Eighty people sat down to the banquet, but the Princesse de Lamballe, who was present to receive the guests, ate apart at a small table in consequence of her indisposition. The week before, the Princesse de Conti had given a great supper, which Madame de Lamballe and her father-in-law attended, but again she felt too ill to sit through the long banquet, and remained in the salon instead. On Sunday the 28th, however, she gave a supper herself at the Hôtel de Toulouse to the Archduke and his wife, at which Monsieur also bestowed the honour of his presence; and on this occasion apparently she took her seat with the rest. The Duc de Penthièvre afterwards called on Monsieur and thanked him for coming to the entertainment; and the Princesse did the same to the Archduke and Archduchess.

She must have been glad when these festivities were over, and does not seem to have accepted any others. In the end of August, however, a curious incident is related concerning her. She drove, it seems, to the Salpêtrière, where Madame de Lamotte was confined, and asked to see her, by her right as a Princess of the Blood. The sister in charge, Sister Victoire, refused absolutely to allow her to enter, on the grounds that Lamotte was 'not yet condemned,' a transparent excuse, since the trial had been at an end in the preceding May; but in spite of this, the Princesse had finally to leave without achieving her

object. Every incident concerned with this mysterious business seems to hold a fresh mystery, and what the Princesse's object may have been has never been explained: scarcely curiosity, as some have suggested; and more probably, as all her chroniclers have taken for granted, the Queen chose this friend as usual to carry out some charitable errand towards the unhappy prisoner. At any rate, if she left money for Lamotte, it never reached her, and was perhaps divided among the other prisoners; since evidently Sister Victoire meant to throw no pleasing light upon the Queen or any other ladies of the court. Eventually Lamotte escaped, and it is said, not without reason, by Marie Antoinette's assistance.

In October the Princesse was again in the country with her father- and sister-in-law and the Orléans children; and record is made of a delightful expedition one day to an old friend of the Duc's, M. de Belleval, at his Château de Bois Robin near Aumale. The visit became a regular annual treat, and the children always loved it, travelling in a simple carriage with four horses; while old M. de Belleval looked upon it as the day of his year. Madame de Lamballe was at Versailles again for Christmas, for she presented the Comtesse de Fancigny on the 24th December, but no further mention is made of her till the following July, 1787.

Politically, meanwhile, things were rapidly going from bad to worse. The treasury was empty, the

people becoming mutinous, and all calling for an Assembly of the States General; an expedient to which resort had not been made for over a hundred years, and which, in the then state of the nation, the King and his Ministers profoundly dreaded. To avoid it, they decided instead to call a Convention of the Notables, men of high rank or distinction from all parts of the kingdom, to discuss what measures would be wisest under the circumstances to pursue; and the Notables accordingly met on the 22nd February 1787, at Versailles. Their number in all was 144, and there were seven *bureaux*, presided over by Princes of the Blood, amongst whom the Duc de Penthièvre was one; but although a large and fashionable audience assembled to listen to the debates, Madame de Lamballe's name is continually absent. It is said that the Duc spoke seriously to the King and Queen at this time concerning the enormous deficit under consideration, and recommended the most drastic economies in their way of living, even that they should limit themselves to wearing clothes of serge and cloth; but it is hardly in keeping with his character that he should have been so impertinent. Nevertheless, great reforms were made at court, sinecures put down, and unnecessary expenses reduced; but the only result was to enrage the courtiers and not to satisfy the people. The Polignacs were particularly loud in discontent, and many more powerful nobles joined the Orléans

faction. The Notables proved of no use, decided nothing, and were finally dissolved in May, leaving all questions of difficulty no more settled than before.

Still being very unwell, the Princesse de Lamballe was advised to try a change of climate in England this summer, and accordingly prepared to start for Brighton early in July. She passed a few days in Paris on her way, and on the morning of the day she was to leave France, Marie Antoinette arrived at nine o'clock at the Hôtel de Toulouse to bid her farewell. This unconventional visit, and the immediate departure of the Princesse directly after, gave rise to all sorts of rumours concerning the errand on which it was quite understood the Queen had despatched her friend. The favourite idea seems that the Princesse was to treat with the exiled Minister Calonne, to beg him to omit certain incidents from the memoirs he was about to publish; but since M. de Calonne was in Holland, and Madame de Lamballe never went anywhere near him, this fabric had little to support it. Curiously enough, Madame de Polignac was also in England at this time, having left France a month earlier. She was growing restive at the Queen's constant dependence upon her and dislike of letting her out of her sight, and offered to resign her post sooner than her liberty; but this the Queen would not accept, and was therefore perforce obliged to allow her leave of absence.

Of the Princesse de Lamballe's doings in England

we find hints in contemporary memoirs. Horace Walpole, writing to the Earl of Strafford on the 28th July, mentions that 'the Duke of Queensberry has given a sumptuous dinner to the Princess de Lamballe': while in Fanny Burney's Diary for August 7th, appears the entry:

'The Prince of Wales gave some account of his expedition to town to meet his brother. (The Duke of York, who had been seven years absent.) He was just preparing, at Brighton, to give a supper entertainment to Madame the Princess de Lamballe, when he perceived his courier. "I daresay," he cried, "my brother 's come!" set off instantly to excuse himself to the Princess, and arrived at Windsor by the time of early prayers, at eight o'clock the next morning.'

The Princesse herself had the reprehensible habit of never dating or placing her letters; so it is impossible to tell on what day was written the lively note to Madame de Lâge given below.

'My baths do me a great deal of good, my dear little one. I shall leave here next Sunday for Blenheim, Oxford, Bath, and different country houses which I shall see on my route. If you write to me, address your letters to London, where I shall not be till the 2nd or 3rd of next month. As I am moving about a good deal, your letters might otherwise get lost. I will let you know from London the day of my return, and then I shall be enchanted, my darling, to see and embrace you again. You will never

believe that I have come to Brighthelmstone to hear *Nina* read by an Englishwoman. I had that satisfaction this morning, and nearly died of laughter. I never saw or heard anything so ridiculous, as you will easily believe. She played the *rôle* of Nina with the ear of Germeuil, and the poor woman gave herself so much trouble over the declaiming of it that she was in a bath of perspiration. Her pathos, instead of touching one, made one laugh. This famous actress is called Madame Obanks; you have seen her at Paris. In England she is that poor Madame de Mazarin who is always in the arms of ridicule. Adieu, my darling, I am going to bed in order to be early at the baths in the morning. I embrace you with all my heart. M. T. L. de Savoye.'

It is evident at least that the English baths did the Princesse good, for she does not seem to have been so much amused for a long time, and when next we hear of her, in the late autumn, she was once more at Versailles, and using her influence to make peace in what threatened to become a serious disagreement among the royal family. The Convention of the Notables having been of no use whatever, and the Treasury in dire need of funds, the King, by his ministers' advice, decided to hold, not a Bed of Justice, but a Royal Sitting, which could compel the Parliament to register his edict for raising money. Though he was quite within his hereditary rights in doing this, there seems to have been a strong feeling among the Parlia-

mentary party that the proceeding was illegal, and the Duc d'Orléans took it upon himself to voice the general discontent, telling the King so to his face at the sitting. The King replied quietly that he had been well advised as to what he was doing, and the proceedings continued; but, on his Majesty's leaving the hall shortly after, Orléans and his brother-in-law, Bourbon, no sooner saw him into his carriage than they rushed back to their colleagues, still assembled, and in the course of a few minutes, proposed, seconded, and passed a Resolution disclaiming all agreement in what had just taken place, and strongly censuring the King's action.

It may be that Orléans really believed in the position he took up, but from his after conduct it seems more probable that it was a mere bid for popularity with the class now growing formidably great, a class which was ready frantically to applaud any disobedience or impertinence to the sovereign; at any rate, his conduct earned him the glory of a cheap martyrdom. Louis XVI. was naturally very angry when he heard what had happened, and at six o'clock in the evening of the 20th November, M. de Breteuil appeared before the Duc d'Orléans with a letter from the King commanding him to retire at once to his estate at Villers-Cotterets, and remain there, seeing none of his relatives, till further orders. The Duc was furiously angry—without much reason, for he really could not have expected his behaviour to pass

unnoticed—and on Breteuil, who had been commanded not to lose sight of him, turning towards the carriage already in waiting, Orléans pushed him rudely aside, saying, 'You shall at least get in after me.'

So powerful was the Orléans faction by now that the banishment of the Duc caused quite a commotion in Paris. The Parliament espoused his cause warmly, and petitioned the King for his release, but Louis was inexorable. The Duchesse d'Orléans and the Princesse de Lamballe implored his pardon, but even they were coldly received for some time. At last they obtained permission to share his exile, and hurried to Villers-Cotterets, where they remained till the end of January 1788; when the ban was removed, and Orléans again returned to Paris. It was at this time that the Princesse, playing at 'Saddle-my-nag' in the garden one winter's day with her little nephew, the Comte de Beaujolais, knocked her head against the dry root of a tree, and received so severe a blow that it was at first feared it would be necessary to trepan her; she recovered, however, far better than had been expected, and was soon quite herself again.

Certainly the English baths had greatly improved her health, for though taking less part than of old in the mere court festivities, she was a good deal in Paris this year, and the Queen's affection for her grew warmer and deeper again as Madame de Polignac became more rude and callous. Never was there a

pupil in that hard school for saints, the world, who had changed more than Marie Antoinette. Under the chill breath of dislike and hatred the people already began to show for her, her childish frivolity and extravagance withered and fell, and she grew silent, proud, and sad. The year before, the King had been to Cherbourg to view the extension of the harbour, and from there had written to her: 'I am the happiest King in the world, for my people love me as I love them'; but already she was well aware that that could never be said of her. Her portrait was refused at the Salon this year for fear of calling forth disloyal demonstrations. Nor were her sorrows all political ones. Her little baby, Sophie, had died at eleven months; her eldest boy was sickly, and it seemed unlikely he would ever grow up; added to which, enemies had already poisoned his mind against his mother. The friend for whom she had done most in the world now plainly showed that the Queen's own welfare and affection were nothing to her; she cared only for the amusement and riches such a friendship brought, and when that turned to anxiety and care, it simply bored her. The very ladies of her Household were not all trustworthy, and it is little wonder that, as '*on revient toujours à ses premiers amours*,' Marie Antoinette should once more throw herself gratefully upon the heart that had never failed her, the spirit that always soothed and comforted.

The Princesse had many godchildren, in whose wel-

fare she took a deep interest; and one of these, the son of a former secretary of M. de Penthièvre, bade fair at this time to become a genius. Népomucène Lemercier was not sixteen this year, when, by the kind offices of Madame de Lamballe, the Queen was persuaded to command a performance of his five-act tragedy *Méléagre* at the Théâtre Français. The piece was given on the 29th February, and though, as might have been expected, somewhat amateurish, it met with a very warm reception from a not too critical audience. The gifted author sat in Madame de Lamballe's box, and at the close of the last act she drew him forward, kissed him on the forehead, and proudly presented him to the enthusiastic house. An older friend than he, however, was also destined to be covered with glory this spring. The Duc de Penthièvre and his daughter and daughter-in-law had long desired that Florian should be admitted to the Académie Française, and three years before this, on the Abbé Millot's death, the ladies had warmly canvassed for their *protégé's* election. Florian was still, however, very young, and the Académie nominated the Abbé Morellet instead. In December 1787 died the Cardinal de Luynes, Archbishop of Sens, the same who had married, or rather blessed the marriage of, the Prince and Princesse de Lamballe at Nangis twenty years before; and on this second occasion the Penthièvre party were successful in obtaining the nomination of their candidate. A magnificent *séance* was held for Florian's reception on the 14th May.

M. de Penthièvre, Madame de Lamballe, the Duchesse d'Orléans and her children were all present, and charming compliments addressed to each of these were of course inserted in the poetic recital given by the new *Académicien*. The election seems to have been very popular and the audience most enthusiastic, and the following day the Duc de Penthièvre entertained all the *Académiciens* to a sumptuous fête at Sceaux.

The Princesse was able to attend the Queen again to her Easter Communion at Notre Dame this year, and early in May made one of a brilliant congregation to witness the public baptism of her two nephews, the Ducs de Chartres and de Montpensier. Chartres, now fourteen, received the names of Louis Philippe; and Montpensier, two years younger, of Antoine Philippe. The Bishop of Melun, Grand Almoner of France, performed the service; and the proceedings were honoured by the presence of little Madame Royale, Monsieur and Madame, the Comte d'Artois, Madame Elizabeth, the Duc d'Angoulême, the Princes de Condé and de Conti, and the Ducs de Bourbon, d'Enghien, and de Berri, besides M. de Penthièvre, Madame de Lamballe, and the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans. After June, when the Duchesse d'Orléans' governess, old Madame de Saluces, a great friend to all the family, died at the Hôtel de Toulouse, the Princesse retired again to the country, sometimes travelling and paying visits by herself, and sometimes accompanying the Duc on his regular annual tour of inspection round

all his vast estates, to which, on the death of the Duc de Choiseul, Amboise, Chanteloup, and Montrichard had been added in lieu of certain debts the late minister had owed him. Some reason for the Princesse's absence from Paris this summer has been found in the fact that during August the charming fifteen-year-old Mdlle. Charlotte de la Chassaine was announced to make her *début* as Sophie in the *Bienfait Anonyme.* This young lady was the daughter of that Mdlle. de la Chassaine who had been one of the half-dozen charmers for whom the Prince de Lamballe forsook his young wife in the first year of their marriage; and, some added, she was the Prince's daughter too, but unless she had greatly understated her age this was not possible, since M. de Lamballe had been dead for nineteen years. It is scarcely likely, however, that this incident alone would have driven the Princesse from Paris, which it was always her custom to leave as soon as the weather grew too warm; and this autumn she and Madame de Lâge took a delightful incognito tour through the west of France.

Their last stay was made with a dear friend of the Princesse, the Abbess Madame de Pardaillon d'Antin, at Fontevrault, and here both hostess and guest were as nearly as possible poisoned one night by partaking of a *ragoût* which had been allowed to cool in a copper vessel. Fortunately the faithful Dr. Saiffert was at hand, and able to apply the proper remedies, so that both happily recovered; and the Princesse

immediately after had silver dishes made for use in her kitchen to avoid a recurrence of the unpleasant experience. From here the travellers intended to return straight to Versailles, where the Queen was already longing for her friend's society; but the journey being a long one to accomplish in a day, although they left at an early hour in the morning, the Princesse gave injunctions to pass through Tours without stopping, in order to economise time. What follows has been very amusingly recounted by Madame de Lâge. As Tours was approached, it became evident that the secret of their incognito was known, and the whole city preparing a great reception for them: at the gates they were stopped by a deputation of influential citizens, the men all in uniform, and the ladies in their most elaborate court costumes, adorned with diamonds, feathers, powder, patches, and magnificently arrayed headdresses. So rare had loyal demonstrations already become, that the Princesse could not but be touched at the enthusiasm shown, and was unable to refuse the cordial invitation brought her to dine with the Archbishop. Once in the carriage again, with a few moments' respite, she and Étiennette whipped out their rouge-puffs, powder-boxes, and pocket-mirrors, and made what hasty toilette they could; though still, at the banquet, says the little Comtesse, they felt dreadfully dowdy and undressed in their simple muslin frocks and straw hats!

CHAPTER XIII

1789-90

M. de Penthièvre again became ill during the winter, and the Princesse spent most of her time with him. Early in January he wrote to the King excusing himself for not personally offering his good wishes on the New Year, but explaining that he had suffered much of late from giddy fits, and now carried a blister on his left arm. Madame de Lamballe was with the Queen, however, as usual, for Easter, and on the 17th April made one of the brilliant company assembled to witness the presentation and public baptism of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans' only daughter, Eugénie Adélaïde Louise, now twelve years old. Cardinal Montmorency, Grand Almoner of France, officiated, and the young lady was theoretically 'held at the font' by their Majesties, Monsieur, the Comte d'Artois, Madame Elizabeth, the Ducs d'Angoulême, de Berri, and d'Enghien, the Princesse de Lamballe, the Duchesse de Bourbon, and her own parents and elder brothers.

Although court life appeared to go on much the same as usual, Paris was growing more and more disturbed, and the people more and more difficult to control. The air was full of new ideas, and all of them tended to rebellion. So hardly had the nation for centuries been kept under, that the bursting of the first trammels became the signal for a general lawlessness. The people had tasted of liberty, and must be drunk with it before they were satisfied. The city was full of revolutionary clubs, scarcely pretending now to secrecy, where the wildest sentiments were talked and applauded. At the Queen's wish, the Princesse de Lamballe and Madame de Lâge penetrated privately to one of these which met at the Petits Carmes one day, to find out what really took place there. They went on foot; Prince George of Hesse, who had a box there, having lent it to them for the occasion, that they might hide behind the curtains and hear without being seen: but it was a dangerous adventure, and both were thoroughly frightened before they could get away. They remained three hours, saw many nobles insulted, and 'the uproar,' says Madame de Lâge, 'was infernal.'

In the first week of May, the long-called-for States General were at last assembled, and great ceremonies graced their opening. The Princesse de Lamballe, now proved 'not a favourite, but a friend,' received the Queen in state at Notre Dame of

Versailles, the hymn 'Veni Creator' was sung, and the procession formed for St. Louis, where a further service was held. Next day the Queen and court were present at the first sitting of the States; Marie Antoinette looking most beautiful, says an eye-witness, but most sad. The King's appearance called for some cheers, her own for dead silence; but sharp and loud behind her came the rolls of applause for Orléans. The Queen's iron resolution almost failed her; the contrast was too cruel, and for an instant she felt faint; but in a moment the Princesse was beside her with a whispered word of courage, and again she commanded herself, and passed on.

Marie Antoinette had indeed good cause for sadness. Her eldest son, now nine years old, always sickly and deformed, and of late exhibiting a violent dislike to his mother, was sinking rapidly; it was not possible that he could long survive. Madame de Lâge tells how she and the Princesse went to Meudon, where he lay ill, about this time to visit him. It gave them quite a shock when they entered, to find him lying prone upon a billiard-table, where he had requested to be put, while a history book was being read aloud to him. 'The same thought struck us both,' she says: 'he looked just like a corpse. The Princesse asked what he was reading.

'"I am reading a very interesting portion of our history," he answered; "the reign of Charles VII."

'I ventured to inquire if his Royal Highness was

reading in chronological order, or if he only chose striking episodes here and there.

'"I am reading it straight through," he replied. "I have not sufficient knowledge to be able to choose, and I am interested in the whole." His beautiful fading eyes looked into mine as though they were speaking, and then, turning to the Duc de Harcourt, he whispered that he should have been informed of the coming of the Princesse. "She is the lady who was so interested in my globe," he added.'

The Princesse seems always to have attached children to her by her interest in their amusements: and the little Prince sent for the globe again, and made a valet turn it round to show to Madame de Lâge. But very shortly after this visit, on the 4th June, the poor child died at Meudon; and the two ladies visited the castle again, to throw holy water upon the little white and silver coffin, which, surrounded by brilliant candles and praying monks, and surmounted with the Dauphin's glittering crown, sword, and orders, represented the last royal lying in state in France for many years. 'How happy,' cried the Queen to her friend in her first distress, 'you are to have never been a mother!' Yet sad though this poor boy's death seemed, it was inexpressibly happier than the fate reserved for every other member of his family. The little Duc de Normandie, aged three, was immediately proclaimed

Dauphin, and the court went into mourning for the space of two months.

Fresh plots and calumnies grew up about the royal family every day. Anxious still to reconcile the King and Orléans, the Princesse at last induced the Queen to receive an emissary of the Duc's at Marly. This man, a banker, Pinel by name, left the Palais Royal on his errand with a satchel full of important papers: but he never reached the Queen, and his murdered body was discovered next day in the forest of Vésinet with the empty portfolio beside it. The mystery was never cleared up, and it need hardly be said that the version which reached the public reflected cruelly upon the Queen and her friend.

Sorrow and anxiety, however, were not yet so all-absorbing at court, but that there were many opportunities for friendly and pleasant little actions such as the Princesse loved to render. Shortly before leaving town for the summer, she rearranged her rooms at the Hôtel de Toulouse, and portioned off a fresh suite for her favourite lady, Madame de Lâge. The Comtesse was away on a visit when the move was made, and on her return was delighted to find that her very dearest friend, Madame de Polastron, had come into Paris for the day on purpose to see her. They hoped to spend the evening together, and Étiennette was more than a little vexed when a message came from the Princesse, desiring her to sup

tête-à-tête with herself, and afterwards to accompany her to the theatre. She thought that on her very first evening, and with her special friend on the spot, she might have been excused from social duties: but all the other ladies it appeared were ill or absent, and it was absolutely necessary that she should go. Louise de Polastron condoled with her, promising to come again early next morning for another chat, and Étiennette ordered a chicken to be roasted for herself when she came in, and set off not in the very best of graces. On returning from the theatre, tired and bored, she conducted the Princesse to her room, bade her good-night, and hurried towards her own apartments, intending, after a mouthful of chicken, to slip into bed and be asleep by eleven o'clock. In the passage, however, a servant came up to ask a question, and detained her a moment or two, so that when she reached her room and opened the door, she stood amazed at the brilliant sight before her. The rooms were full of gay lights, beautiful flowers, magnificent presents, china, pictures, etc., and in the centre a lovely portrait of Madame de Polastron, a gift from the Princesse. The whole evening had been a ruse to get her out of the way while Louise de Polastron was left to arrange everything: and now, while the servant had kept her in the passage, the Princesse herself had slipped through Madame de Ginestous' rooms, and was here to welcome her with smiles and embraces, surrounded by a gay assembly

of all the young Comtesse's special friends. She was very happy, and very remorseful for her ill temper, and after half an hour spent in examining all the wonderful and beautiful surprises prepared for her, somebody remarked that it was time for supper. Étiennette, with agonised recollection of that solitary roast chicken, wondered how she was going to entertain them all, but almost immediately her fears were set at rest, for the doors of the dining-room were thrown open, and a delicious repast displayed, all served on a beautiful service of white and gold Sèvres china. 'I thought,' explained the Princesse, 'my child would let me bring my supper to her rooms. I had intended asking you all to sup with me after seeing everything here, but I thought after all it would be nicer to stay in this pretty room.' After supper, the merry party played quinze till a late hour; and next morning Madame de Lâge was informed that the Sèvres service was all hers, and that several extra pieces belonging to it had been sent since.

During the summer, the Princesse and her favourite lady travelled in Switzerland, where they had hoped M. de Penthièvre would join them, as he was still far from well, and his doctor even wished to send him to Italy: but he does not seem to have been able to make up his mind to leave home, and he remained at one or another of his own castles all the summer. On the 14th July the first decisive blow

against the monarchy was struck by the people of France in the storming and destruction of the Bastille. The court, hitherto blind to its danger, was now, the temper of the people proved, in a frenzy of alarm : and many important persons hastened to remove themselves from Paris, and even to cross the borders of France. The Comte d'Artois left hastily for Turin, and a week or so later, his wife followed him with a suite of thirty persons : it was given out that they should return in the spring, but since the Comtesse took care to sell all her household goods before starting, and the Comte left many debts behind him, nobody put much faith in this story. It was, in fact, twenty-five years before Artois entered France again. Soon after their departure, the Duc d'Enghien, the Duc de Bourbon, the Prince de Condé, the Prince de Conti, the Duc de Vauguyon, the Abbé Vermond, the Baron de Breteuil, and many others, also emigrated in haste. Necker said afterwards that in the course of one fortnight, passports had been signed for six thousand of the richest inhabitants of France.

The Duchesse de Polignac had often before offered to resign, and the Queen had refused to listen to her : but now Marie Antoinette herself, recognising the hatred the mob had for her favourite, urged her immediate flight. The parting was one of many tears, for though of late disappointed in her friend, the Queen had loved her very dearly, and fourteen

years' constant companionship cannot be broken without a pang. By the assistance of Count Fersen, with great secrecy and great fear, the powerful Polignacs crept from France during the night, the Duchesse disguised as a lady's maid on the coach-box; and after many agonised adventures they reached Rome in safety, where the Pope had the bells rung and Ave Marias said for the protection of France. 'Farewell, my dearest, tenderest friend,' wrote Marie Antoinette the very night the Duchesse left: 'how terrible is that word farewell! I am powerless even to embrace you.' She had given her a purse of five hundred louis on her departure, and continued to write constantly to her, sometimes twice in a day; often saying, 'How happy I feel to know that you are safe!' until at last the danger grew too great: she admitted, 'We are watched like criminals!' and so the correspondence ceases. The Marquise de Tourzel was appointed Governess to the royal children in the place of Madame de Polignac, and took the oath of fidelity on the 2nd August 1789.

In striking contrast to the pale-hearted conduct of the younger Princes of the Blood, stands out the action of the Duc de Penthièvre, who, old and ailing though he was, journeyed up from the country during August for a few days, entirely to wait upon the King and Queen at Versailles, and assure them of his unswerving loyalty and devotion. They were both deeply

touched; and it tells much for the affection and respect with which this aged Prince was regarded by all classes, that whilst at the Hôtel de Toulouse, a detachment of the newly enrolled National Guards presented themselves before him and requested the honour of a review. He also contrived to get across to see his daughter one evening at the Palais Royal, avoiding the gardens of the palace, which were the stronghold of all the wild and disaffected spirits in Paris. This was indeed a sad situation for the unfortunate Duchesse, and there was at this time much to trouble both her and her father on her behalf.

Away in Switzerland, the Princesse de Lamballe does not seem to have fully realised the whole weight of the blow which the fall of the Bastille meant to the royalty of France, for on her return on the 2nd September, instead of joining the Queen, she went straight to her father-in-law at Aumale, and almost immediately accompanied him to Eu. Probably she did not like to leave him till his own daughter could take her place, and it is certain that during all this time she was receiving constant and affectionate letters from the Queen, begging her to remain with the old Duc while he needed her, to care for her own health, and not to think of returning to Paris. 'We are fairly quiet here for the present: the *bourgeoisie* and the good people are well disposed towards us,' wrote poor Marie Antoinette on the very morning of disaster. In spite of this reassurance, however, the

Princesse seems to have felt very depressed and worried, torn in two directions by divided duties; and at last, at nine o'clock on the evening of the 7th October, a courier galloped up to the castle with a letter that decided her upon immediate action. It was from the Queen, and told of the terrible events of the preceding two days at Versailles; of the march of the hungry people from Paris; and of the attempt made to murder her Majesty in her bed early on the morning of the 6th, an attempt only frustrated by her flying in her nightdress through a secret passage to the King's apartments, while the ruffians were already battering in her door and murdering her gallant sentinel. The following morning Lafayette, the commander of the National Guard, who, with Bailly, was usually known as the 'Rainbow,' because they invariably arrived after the storm, had persuaded the King to start with his family for Paris and the Tuileries, as the only way to appease the mob; and the whole time of this wretched journey, lasting six hours to cover twelve miles, shrieking crowds surrounded the great rocking carriage, waving on pikes the mangled heads of the sentinels, terrifying the little Dauphin, and screaming aloud, 'Now we shall have bread enough! We have got the Baker, the Baker's wife, and the Baker's little boy!'

Fortaire, the faithful valet of the Duc de Penthièvre, has left us some account of the manner in

which the Princesse received this alarming news. For a moment she sat motionless. She knew that bedroom at Versailles well : often had she carried in the Queen's breakfast-tray herself, says Madame Campan, and sat by the bedside chatting with her friend while Marie Antoinette sipped her morning chocolate. Those happy, careless days were all past now, and she had not been with her friend when the moment of danger arrived. She sprang to her feet with a cry of 'O, my papa! What a terrible event! I must set out at once.'

So soon as he learned what had occurred, the Duc only regretted that his age and infirmities would not permit him to accompany her at once, but promised to follow the next day, breaking his journey at Aumale. A carriage was immediately ordered, and though the weather was wild and stormy, the Princesse set off at midnight, accompanied by one lady and M. de Chambonas, a gentleman in attendance on the Duc. They travelled without stopping, and reached Paris very late the following evening, to find the whole city brilliant with illuminations, and offering a sad contrast to the gloomy state of things they found prevailing at the Palace. The Tuileries had not been occupied by royalty for over a hundred years; the few state pensioners who held rooms there had had to be turned out in a hurry and compensation made them; there was no proper furniture or appointments; names were chalked on doors; the royal

family had to put up with all sorts of makeshifts, and everything was wretchedly uncomfortable. But the Queen threw herself with tears into her friend's arms, and for the moment felt her worst troubles at an end.

In the course of the next few days, some order was created out of the confusion; furniture sent from Versailles, necessary repairs and alterations set in hand, pale shadows of ancient court etiquette again reincarnated. Such of the nobles as remained staunch hurried to the side of the King and Queen: M. de Penthièvre arrived in Paris the day after his daughter-in-law, and stayed a week at the Hôtel de Toulouse, visiting the Tuileries every day: the King held his *levées* and *couchers* as usual, the Queen her Sunday and Tuesday card-parties. Twice a week too, on Sundays and Thursdays, she held a court before attending Mass, and dined in public with the King afterwards: and more punctiliousness than ever was shown in the weekly reception of the Corps Diplomatique and the constant official deputations sent to wait upon the royal family. A hateful innovation was made in the appointment of six hundred National Guards to various posts inside the Palace, while the faithful Swiss Guards were kept without, but this had to be endured: the King was supposed to be 'grateful to his faithful people who had rescued him from bad advisers'; and so the wretched fiction was kept up.

At every appearance, public or private, of the

Queen, the Princesse de Lamballe was ever at her side; and she, of whom complaints had formerly been made that she found it too much trouble to entertain, entertained now widely and lavishly. She hoped by this means to rally all faithful nobles once more about the court, but only few of them came. The Queen attended some of her parties, not so much for the distraction, as to keep in touch with those who were still loyal; but so-called pleasure was wretchedness to her now, and an incident that occurred one evening threw her into such agitation that she could not bring herself to go again. So few of the old noblesse remained in France that Madame de Lamballe was obliged to invite strangers in order to fill her rooms, and on this occasion, an English gentleman was present, who showed a ring, containing, he said, a lock of Oliver Cromwell's hair. The name of Cromwell the regicide was abhorrent to Marie Antoinette, and she left the salon in haste; and after this, except for necessary official appearances, kept entirely to her own family and friends for society. M. and Madame de Provence were still at the Luxembourg, and came over frequently for the evenings: Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Lamballe were always ready to play backgammon with her; she found she could not settle to read, but did much needlework, and amused and interested herself in teaching her daughter and another little girl, Ernestine Lambriquet, an orphan, whose mother had been in the service of Madame

Royale. The King, poor man, saw the fine weather pass without any hunting, and recorded the fact gloomily in his journal. It was impossible now to walk in the Palace gardens, as the public was admitted, and the crowds were great and most disagreeable; nor yet could the Queen visit the theatres, the mob being so violent and excitable. The Duchesse de Biron, who was there in her box one evening, was struck on the cheek by a pear. She sent it to Lafayette next morning, remarking, 'Allow me to present you with the first fruits of the Revolution.'

The Princesse de Lamballe and Madame Elizabeth were given the Pavilion de Flore in the Tuileries garden for their use, and the apartments in this they shared; except for flying visits to her villa at Passy, or to M. de Penthièvre at Châteauneuf-sur-Loire, the former remaining here the entire winter. During one of these brief absences, the Queen wrote to her:—

'*November* 7, 1789.

'You will not take care of yourself, and I am quite worried about you. Listen to me, my dear Lamballe, I shall be really angry with you. My health is fairly good, and my children's excellent. . . . My daughter longs to see you again. . . . The Dauphin has asked for you many times to help him with his garden; he tells me in his baby language that he wants to give you breakfast with Mama Queen. . . .'

The chief troubles of France seem to have arisen

from her empty treasury, and during this autumn the strongest efforts were made to reduce the deficit. Patriotic gifts of money, plate, and jewels arrived at the Bank every day from various wealthy nobles, amongst whom M. de Penthièvre was one of the first to sacrifice a large share of his possessions; on the 3rd October valuables to the worth of 1848 marks were received from him. A very human letter from Madame de Lamballe to her treasurer, M. Toscan, on this subject is extant, written on the 25th September, and sealed with her red seal and the characteristic words, '*Plutôt Mourir Que Changer.*' In it she bids Toscan find out what her brother-in-law the Duc d'Orléans has already given, remarking that she is on the whole a poor woman and wishes to show it; there has been enough cant about nobility, and she does not intend to give up everything; nevertheless, she will order a service of English pottery in Paris and renounce her own best ware. A week later, she wrote again, evidently somewhat worried, asking for an exact account of her household expenses, since she has decided, 'unfortunately for her people,' to reduce her expenditure, and let the house at Passy, furnished. She has sufficient liveries for her servants for the present, and when those wear out, other arrangements will have to be made; things will be very different in the future. Toscan, however, is to keep her ideas to himself, as she does not wish all the world to hear of her economies; and meanwhile the

pension of ten louis for her old nurse at Turin is never to be forgotten, but she has written to her sister about that. Early in November, valuables to the amount of 625 marks were received from her at the *Monnaie.*

Relations between the King and Orléans became more and more strained, and the Duc would at this time have again been banished but for his popularity with the people, which made such a step dangerous; and also perhaps for the entreaties of his wife and Madame de Lamballe. Both these ladies were, however, growing slowly disillusioned in the once gay and gallant Chartres, now the debauched and shifty Orléans; and it was probably with sighs of gratitude that his relatives learned that the King had intrusted him with a diplomatic mission to England which would probably keep him absent for some months. He himself was a great friend of the Prince Regent, and could have gone to no place to suit him better.

The year 1790 dawned gloomily for France. The Queen's brother, the Emperor Joseph, died at Vienna, on February 27th, and was succeeded by his brother Leopold; but in spite of the Austrian leanings with which the people charged their Queen, her native land had plainly showed itself no support to her in trouble; and this change of rulers made no political difference. The Duc de Penthièvre was very ill of asthma at Amboise early in February, and Madame de Lamballe hurried to nurse him, receiving

many tender letters from the Queen during her temporary absence, of which the following is an example :—

'*March* 4.

'My dear Heart,—Present circumstances occupy my soul too much not to be very sensible of your letter and your sweet friendship: your heart is one that never changes, and that misfortune only makes more affectionate. . . . You know all that passes here. It is impossible to go out without being insulted a dozen times an hour; I walk no more, and stay in my room all day.'

CHAPTER XIV

1790-1

Living very quietly, and endeavouring by every means to satisfy and appease the people, the King and Queen were subjected to no more violent attacks this year. Occasionally, spasmodic outbursts of loyalty were shown, but these guided so little by reason and so greatly by caprice as to be rather less than more reassuring: the unhappy royal family was entirely in the hands of the people, and for the present the many-headed stood content. Already, Marie Antoinette cherished frantic longings to escape, to see her children at least in safety; but Louis, whose judgment seems to have become stupefied with trouble, could not be got to decide upon any plan of action, whether to stay or go, and his wife was in despair at this fatal lethargy. Through all it was necessary to feign entire happiness and confidence in their surroundings, and sometimes the Queen's patience was strained to breaking-point.

Now that the Duchesse de Polignac was gone, all the pent-up hatred of the people at the Queen's friends could vent itself only upon the one who faithfully

held that title through danger and dismay. The vilest libels concerning the Queen and her court were openly published and circulated in Paris, and from these it was too much to hope that Madame de Lamballe's name would be absent: in one of the worst, the *Gallerie des Dames Françaises*, printed in London, and said to have been written by the Marquis de Luchet, the Princesse was slanderously described under the title of Balzaïs. One of her ladies saw her reading the volume, but she laid it down afterwards without comment: she was prepared to suffer more than that in friendship's cause.

The title of Superintendent of the Household, a mere honour with no duties for sixteen years, was now accepted by the Princesse in its widest and most personal sense: she herself undertook all the household arrangements of the Tuileries, and found it a very onerous and responsible task. So surrounded was the Queen by spies and traitors that it became necessary to suspect even her most faithful servants until they were proved innocent; and the watching of them was a most distasteful, if obvious, duty. Madame Campan has told us how, two years later, just before the fatal 10th August, the Princesse sent for her early one morning. 'I found her seated on a sofa facing the window that opened on the Pont Royal, in her room in the Pavilion de Flore, level with the Queen's. She told me to sit down. She held a writing-desk on her knees, and said,

"You have had many enemies who have endeavoured to deprive you of the Queen's favour, but without success. I myself, not knowing you so well as the Queen, on the arrival of the court at the Tuileries, had spies set outside your door, since I had heard that several of the most virulent deputies of the *Tiers État* were constantly received by you; but it was in fact that wardrobe woman above you. The Queen knows and loves you, and the King also." The Princesse then showed me a list of the names of all those employed about the Queen's chamber, and asked me for information concerning them. Fortunately, I had only favourable information to give, and she wrote down everything I told her.'

It had always been the custom of the royal family to spend a few weeks at St. Cloud in June, and rather to their surprise, no objection was made to their doing so this year. Very thankful they must have been to leave the hot and stuffy atmosphere of Paris and the many inconveniences of the Tuileries for this blessed respite of cool shade and leafy spaces, to many of them the last holiday of any sort life held in store. The Princesse de Lamballe was, of course, in attendance, and whispers and rumours of escape constantly kept the court in a flutter of anxiety. If any such plans were really laid, however, they were made known to very few, and apparently abandoned in consequence of insuperable difficulties. The National Guard had followed

the family to St. Cloud, and watched them as rigorously as ever; nor would it have been possible for the King and Queen to leave France while the old aunts still remained in danger: their escape must necessarily be contrived first.

In the middle of July the King and court were obliged to return to Paris for a few days to witness the newly inaugurated Fête of the Federation, at which the Duc d'Orléans, just returned from England, was also present, meeting with but a cold reception from his sovereign, and a doubtful one from the people, who, in spite of his lavish bids for their favour, could not but be distrustful of one so anglicised as himself, since a friend to the English Prince Regent, they felt, could scarcely be a true friend to France.

This Fête of the Federation, perforce accepted with smiles and apparent pleasure, must in fact have been very galling to the royal family. It was held to commemorate the anniversary of the Fall of the Bastille, and took place on the Champ de Mars: for days beforehand all classes had been busily employed in digging up the turf to form the huge amphitheatre in which 400,000 spectators were to be seated to witness the ceremony. When the day came, it poured with rain, but this in no way damped the ardour and excitement of the people. The object of the Fête was to take the oath of faithfulness to the nation, and deputies were sent up from every province to

join the immense mass of Federates in Paris; as they marched through the dripping streets, the people shouted blessings upon them, and more practically, let down wine, ham, fruit, and sausages from the windows for their benefit. It took three hours to assemble all the Federates upon the ground: the King and the President of the Assembly were then seated upon exactly similar seats side by side, a raised stand having been provided for the Queen and her ladies; and in the centre of the field rose the gigantic erection named 'the Altar of the Country': on the steps of which stood three hundred priests in white surplices and tricolour scarves, who were to assist the Bishop of Autun to celebrate the Mass. Divine service over, the King rose first, and stretching his hand out to the 'Altar,' took the prescribed oath in a loud voice, amid the cheers of the assembled crowd. 'I, King of the French,' the formula ran: 'swear to employ the power delegated to me by the Constitutional Act of the State in maintaining the constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by me.' No sooner had he pronounced these words than the Queen sprang to her feet, and lifting the Dauphin in her arms, exclaimed, 'Here is my son! he joins as well as myself in those sentiments!' and amidst the almost hysteric cheers her unexpected words called forth, the sun broke suddenly through the heavy rain-clouds, and all France seemed to rejoice. In the evening, Paris was *en fête*;

a dancing-floor was laid over the site of the destroyed Bastille; every house was illuminated, and it seemed as if the millennium had arrived. Shortly after, the court returned for the remainder of its interrupted visit to St. Cloud.

Bad news concerning the health of the Duc de Penthièvre again called Madame de Lamballe to his side early in August, and she remained with him for over two months, during which time she heard constantly and in the most affectionate terms from the King and Queen.

'*September* 7.

'I beg you, Madame, my dear cousin, to give us some news of the good M. de Penthièvre. It is true that what you say about his state is not alarming, but it pains me much, for I have a very deep affection for him, as I have for you.—LOUIS.'

'The King was just starting out shooting, my dear Lamballe, and was unable to write more to you, so he has begged me to finish this letter. Do not return, my dear heart, I have already begged you, and I beg you again. The health of M. de Penthièvre needs all your care, and I am much grieved at it; and you do not take enough care of yourself. I shall be very seriously displeased if you will not listen to any of my recommendations. Has friendship then no claim upon you? No, I do not wish you to return; for your heart would be too afflicted and you would weep too sorely over your unfortunate

friend. I know that you love me; that is sufficient. I have much need of it. You know all that passes; and I will say nothing to you about it. I will speak only of my love for you and for M. de Penthièvre, and of the health of both, for which indeed you must answer to my friendship. Adieu! I embrace you.

MARIE ANTOINETTE.'

In October, the Duc, being somewhat recovered, went to pay a visit to his cousin, Madame de Pardaillon, at Fontevrault; and the Princesse seized the opportunity for a few days with her old friend the Marquis de Clermont-Gallerande, one whose advice she frequently asked and took, and whom she afterwards named one of the executors to her will. Returning from here through Tours to rejoin her father-in-law at Amboise, she followed almost on the good Duc's steps, and seems to have set down to his popularity the enthusiastic reception she again met with in this loyal city. Fortaire declares that on reaching Amboise she threw herself into the arms of M. de Penthièvre, exclaiming, 'O my dear papa! what a delightful and flattering reception your journey through Tours just before me has procured for me! It is a great joy for me to feel that I belong to you, and to see the love that every one has for you. How kind they are at Tours, and what a charming language they speak—it was of nothing but you, my dear papa!' From Amboise they went to

Châteauneuf for a time, and then to Paris, arriving on the 28th November. M. de Penthièvre only remained a week in Paris, which never suited him, and then returned to his castle at Eu: this was the last time he ever saw the King and Queen. A very unhappy family affair was troubling both him and the Princesse at this period—the matrimonial disputes of the Duc and Duchesse d'Orléans.

The daughter of the Duc de Penthièvre had borne much and for long from the man whom in her impulsive youth she had so wilfully married, but there was a point beyond which endurance could not go. That she belonged to the most loyal house in France, while her husband led the van of rebellion, was outward reason enough for disagreement; added to which, her dowry, paid through him, had almost ceased to reach her, and she declared openly that unless she could receive her own money regularly every month she would be ruined. But a more intimate though equally well-known cause goaded her really at last to demand a legal separation—his gross unfaithfulness and immorality. Her children (and she was the most tender of mothers) had been taken from her and given into the sole charge of his acknowledged mistress, Madame de Genlis; he and this woman had poisoned their minds against their own mother till they clung to the 'Governess' in defiance of her love; her own daughter was educated on equal terms with their child Pamela; her son,

a youth of past seventeen, who should have been surrounded with men, or at least have travelled with a tutor, still remained entirely with the Genlis and derived his education from her. It has been declared that in the innocence of her heart, Madame d'Orléans had been ignorant till now of the relations between her husband and this woman, and that the Princesse de Lamballe first guessed and warned her how matters stood, thus earning for herself the undying rancour of her brother-in-law; but it can hardly be supposed in such an age that such an open scandal had not been long patent to all most concerned by it. Madame de Genlis, as we know, had always hated Madame de Lamballe, and no doubt put it into the fuddled head of Orléans that this woman, whose life had been filled with services and kindnesses to him and his house, had turned his wife and father-in-law against him from pure malice, inducing them to institute legal proceedings in order to deprive him of the handsome income his marriage had brought him. More probably still, through all his seeming friendliness, while glad at all times to make use of the Princesse's intercessions when out of favour at court, he had never forgotten his part in the death of her young husband twenty years before, and always suspected the revenge she never showed. Fear is the cruellest passion in the world, more cruel even than jealousy, and from the moment it was whispered him that Madame de Lamballe had

a youth of p[illegible] have been surrounded [illegible] elled with a tutor, [illegible] enti[illegible] Genlis and derive[illegible] on from her. [illegible] declared that [illegible] ence of her heart, M[illegible] ans [illegible] orant till now of the relatio[illegible] d and this woman, and that the Pr[illegible] balle first guessed and warned her ho[illegible] stood, thus earning for herself the undying rancour of her brother-in-law; but it can hardly be supposed in such an age that such an open scandal had not been long patent to all most concerned by it. Madame de Genlis, as we know, had always hated Madame de Lamballe, and no doubt put it into the [illegible] life had been [illegible] and [illegible] to him and his [illegible] turned his wife and father-in-law against him from pure malice, inducing them to [illegible] legal proceedings in order to deprive him of the handsome income his marriage had brought him. More probably still, through all his seeming friendliness, while glad at all times to make use of the Princesse's intercessions when out of favour at court, he had never forgotten his part in the death of her young husband twenty years before, and always suspected the revenge she never showed. Fear is the cruellest passion in the world, more cruel even than jealousy, and from the moment it was whispered him that Madame de Lamballe had

done him one ill turn and might do him another, her doom, so far as he was concerned in it, was sealed.

The Princesse's sympathies in this affair were necessarily entirely with her sister-in-law; she had suffered too much herself from infidelity to feel otherwise. The Duchesse got her provisional 'Separation of Goods' early in February 1791, though much of the legal business connected with the matter lingered on for two years more, till most of the principal persons concerned were dead: she joined her father, however, at Eu on the 10th February, and never left him more during his lifetime. This naturally left the Princesse very much more free to devote herself to the Queen, and she spent the winter almost entirely at the Tuileries. Time passed slowly and sadly, the Queen wretched, the court anxious, and everything very gloomy. Wicked and malicious libels were still rife; everybody read them, and tried to keep them from the Queen, but with no success. Emigration continued, and fewer and fewer people attended Madame de Lamballe's receptions, or the children's parties Madame de Tourzel occasionally gave for her royal charges. The Princesse was deeply hurt when her chief lady-in-waiting, Madame de Las Cases, declared her health made it imperative she should leave Paris and take the waters at Aix immediately; but though giving her leave to go, Madame de Lamballe knew well it was merely fears for her safety that had actuated her, and resolved never to take her back into her house-

hold again. On the 19th February the King's two remaining aunts (for Madame Sophie and Nun Louise were dead) escaped in safety to Italy ; and this meant a great step towards the possible escape of the royal family itself. Unfortunately the National Assembly recognised this also, and the guard upon the Palace was redoubled ; it had at first been rumoured that the old ladies had carried off the Dauphin with them, but though the plan had probably been mooted, it had been discovered to be impracticable. The Princesse de Chimay, being also extremely unpopular, managed likewise to get away, and her post was given to Madame d'Ossun.

During this winter the Queen had entertained great hopes of saving the situation through the friendship of the Comte de Mirabeau. Mirabeau, though born to nobility, had been so evilly treated by his father in his youth that he had been driven to throw in his lot with the Revolutionaries, in whose counsels he held immense power and influence ; and on the 31st January he had been appointed President of the National Assembly. He was, however, always susceptible to the smiles of a beautiful woman, and Marie Antoinette stooped to put forth all her charms to obtain his help ; it was said that he had several private interviews with her in the apartment of Madame de Lamballe, whither he came disguised as a monk in a brown habit ; but even the power he so confidently held himself to possess over his fellow

leaders was not proof against the suspicion with which every friend of the court was regarded. His popularity declined, violent charges were made against him, and all hopes either party may have reposed in him came to a sudden close by his death on the 2nd April, after only a few days' illness. The cry of 'Poison' was of course raised, but no proof of foul play was ever found; and it is indeed doubtful if one man, however strong and well disposed, could at this juncture have saved the monarchy. He left one signal record of the character of Marie Antoinette as at this time he found it: 'She has the courage of a man,' he said; and again, 'She is the only man the King has about him.'

Meanwhile, the King moped again through the winter without any occupation, and at last became actually ill for want of air and exercise. For a month real anxiety prevailed concerning his health, but on the 18th March a Te Deum was sung for his recovery; and shortly after, the royal family decided to pay their usual Easter visit to St. Cloud. Carriages were accordingly ordered to be in attendance for this purpose after Mass on the 18th April, but this time the suspicions of the people of Paris had been too long aroused by rumours of escape, and they were determined the prisoners—for indeed by this time the royal family were no less—should not leave the Tuileries. An immense and excited crowd surrounded the palace, through which the great carriages with

difficulty made their way to the entrance; but having made their way, the family came out and took their seats in them; the expedition, however, went no further. For two hours a fearful din and riot rocked around them, alarm bells were rung, people screamed and shrieked, seized the horses' reins, maltreated the servants, threatened the King, and for all the frantic efforts of Lafayette, would not be controlled. At last it had to be admitted there was no hope of getting away that day; the King, Queen, and their children went indoors once more, and the great carriages were sent back to the stables. There were to be no more pleasant country visits for these unhappy people.

From this time the Queen at least was determined upon escape; and the young Swede, Count Fersen, fit servant of his gallant King Gustavus, and devoted adorer of Marie Antoinette, undertook to help her. At court no questions were asked: if plan there was, it was best no one should know of it till too late for the slightest indiscretion to put it in jeopardy. Even those who were to take part had better know nothing until the moment arrived.

CHAPTER XV

1791

On the evening of Sunday the 20th June, at the close of her usual card-party, the Queen turned to the Princesse de Lamballe, and bidding her good-night in a particularly affectionate manner, remarked that she looked tired, and should allow herself a few days in the country during the week. So struck was the Princesse by her manner and words, that she mentioned both to M. de Clermont before taking her leave for Passy, where she was spending that night, probably in order to attend to some business.

At nine o'clock the next morning she was awakened by a note from the Queen, informing her that the flight had been fixed for the evening before, after the guests had departed; that she hoped by now to be well on her way to the frontier with her husband, two children, Madame Elizabeth and Madame de Tourzel; and that as it was probable much excitement and anger would be roused in Paris directly the flight was discovered, she desired the Princesse to make all haste to escape also in a different direction, and to join her as soon as possible at Brussels,

where she intended to stay with her sister, the Archduchess Marie Christine, who was married to the Governor of the Netherlands. Madame de Lamballe did not lose a moment in this emergency. She immediately gave out that she had received disquieting news concerning M. de Penthièvre, and must visit him at once; ordered her carriage, and taking with her Madame de Lâge, Madame de Ginestous, and two gentlemen, set off post-haste for Aumale. Fortaire has described how at six o'clock that evening, the old Duc and his daughter were sitting tranquilly in their garden before the castle, when a postchaise galloped up, and almost before it had stopped, the Princesse de Lamballe sprang out, looking pale and agitated, threw herself into the arms of her father-in-law, drew him and the Duchesse d'Orléans hurriedly into a room, and closed the door. They were shut up here for some time, and when the door was at last opened, M. de Penthièvre sat at the table, writing hurriedly, Madame d'Orléans lay weeping in an armchair, and the Princesse stood with her watch in her hand, exclaiming, 'I beg you, double the service if possible; we must start in a quarter of an hour.'

Fresh horses were put in; the Duc, in his capacity of Grand Admiral of France, wrote introductory letters to the marine authorities at Boulogne, begging them to render his daughter-in-law all the help in their power; called his controller to accompany her,

and almost immediately, with a jingle and a crash, she was gone. Fortaire admits himself to have been puzzled, and more so as the Duc immediately gave orders to leave for Eu the following morning, which was done. That same day, at ten in the evening, couriers from Dieppe brought the news of the King's escape to the Municipal of Eu, and the Mayor and Procureur of the Commune arrived at the castle in official scarf and uniform, and respectfully announced that, much against their will, it was their duty to set a watch upon the Duc and Madame d'Orléans. 'Certainly,' replied M. de Penthièvre genially: 'and we could not be in better hands.' He himself had been unanimously chosen by the neighbourhood, Commander-in-chief of the Local National Guard, so when his second in command shortly after put in an appearance, he remarked, 'Well, I suppose you have come to guard me.' 'Pardon me,' replied the loyal lieutenant: 'under the circumstances, I have come to place myself under my Commander-in-chief.' To which the Duc, much touched, replied, 'Ah, you are very good! But all the same, I am your prisoner.' They were not, however, guarded for more than eighteen days, and on the 12th July were free again, when they immediately left Eu, and never returned there.

Meanwhile the Princesse, on leaving, gave orders to drive to Eu, but so soon as her equipage was out of sight of the castle, changed the direction to Abbe-

ville ; and Boulogne was reached the following afternoon, the 22nd June. Her intention was to cross to Dover, and then recross to Ostend, whence she could easily join the Queen at Brussels. The letters M. de Penthièvre had given her proved of the greatest service, and she was fortunate enough to find an English ship just about to start. She went on board at once, and herself spoke to the sailors, begging them to hasten their preparations, which were so effectively accomplished that her sails were already fading on the horizon, when a cannon announced to Boulogne the discovery of the King's departure.

Either at Dover, or at Ostend, which she reached on the 26th June, the Princesse received the appalling news that the King's flight had been abortive, the royal family recognised and stopped at Varennes, and the whole party driven back in a hideous triumph to the Tuileries. Never was any project entered upon with less common-sense than this crowning fiasco of this ill-fated royal family : Monsieur and Madame, who had set forth separately the same night, had arrived in safety at their destination : the King's aunts, the Artois', the Polignacs, the Princesse herself, and hundreds of others, had engineered their escapes with perfect skill : but every single thing that should not have been done was done in connection with the flight of the King and Queen themselves. Marie Antoinette refused to be separated for an hour from any member of her family, so the whole

party must travel together, and a huge *berline* was built to carry them, in itself sufficient to attract attention anywhere. Then endless delays in packing up jewellery and effects made a late start: the King insisted on walking up all the hills, and the carriage must needs wait for him: detachments of yet loyal regiments, set to guard the approaches to certain towns, hung about for half a day, rousing suspicion every minute, and at last drew off, fearing the route had been changed, so that when the wretched *berline* at last rumbled into sight, no one in it knew the way to turn. Night was approaching, sharp watch was kept upon the road by which the soldiers had waited so long, the King put his head out of the window to ask a question, he was recognised, and all was lost. Perhaps of all the long martyrdom she was to suffer, that weary, noisy drive, hopeless and defeated, through the dust and heat of another long June day back to the Tuileries, the stuffy *berline* made yet more stuffy by the addition of Pétion and Barnave to its inmates, must to Marie Antoinette have seemed the most terrible.

This news was indeed disastrous, and the Princesse knew not what to do next. A legend, long flourishing and hard dying, would have it that she flew to London, threw herself on her knees before Queen Charlotte and Pitt, implored their assistance for her friend, and was refused; but this is absolutely untrue. Madame de Lâge was with her throughout all

her wanderings, and has kept accurate record of the time and place of every day. It is true she reached Dover, but she stayed there only one night. Yet so persistent was the rumour of her diplomatic mission in England that on the 26th June, an announcement appeared in the *Chronique de Paris* to the effect that 'Madame de Lamballe has gone to England, having embarked, it is said, at Montreuil': and Madame de Lâge's own mother continued for over a week to address letters to her daughter in England. The legend has been kept up by a spurious letter, long accepted as genuine, supposed to be written by Marie Antoinette to her sister the Archduchess Marie Christine, in which she speaks of her 'dear Lamballe having just undertaken a perilous journey to England in all secrecy on my behalf'; and even gives detailed accounts of her interviews with the Queen and court. The Princesse never attempted any diplomatic work outside her own country, nor was there time or opportunity for her to receive any instructions from the Queen: and whilst on this point it must be mentioned how necessary it is to accept with very great reserve all letters purporting to have been written by Marie Antoinette. We have already had occasion to quote some, and shall do so yet again: many are undoubtedly genuine, but others more doubtful, and the one to which allusion has just been made is unquestionably a forgery. The Queen did write very frequently

to the Princesse, and the Princesse preserved as many of her letters as she was able: additions may, of course, easily have been made to them since, but unless internal evidence proves them false, we must suppose them genuine.

Having recovered from the first shock of these deplorable tidings, Madame de Lamballe thought it best to continue her journey, as she had arranged, to Brussels, where she could at least meet and confer with the Queen's friends as to the next step wisest to be taken. Brussels was reached on the 27th June, and here, besides the Archduchess, she found Monsieur and Madame safely escaped, and a week later was joined by Count Fersen, a raging and disappointed man. These two good creatures, despite the royal cause each held so dearly at heart, seem to have had little else in common, for Fersen notes in his Diary for 6th July, 'Conversation with Madame de Lamballe; gossip and nonsense'; and says no more of her. Indeed there was much gossip, much talk, and it was difficult to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. The question with the Princesse was entirely whether she could serve the Queen best by remaining out of France or by returning to her. The great difficulty in escape hitherto had always been that there were so many relatives and friends who must not be left: all must fly together, with great addition to anxiety and doubtfulness of universal security; but now that all were safe, except the

royal family itself, it might be kinder to remain away and keep the board clear, so to speak, for further moves. Monsieur and Madame decidedly thought so, and set off for Coblentz, where they set up as good an imitation court as they could, and welcomed all *émigrés*; but Madame de Lamballe could not quite satisfy herself as to what the Queen would really wish. She lingered, therefore, a fortnight at Brussels, until she learned that it was Marie Antoinette's express desire that her former ladies and servants should not, at least immediately, rejoin her, since she believed they could do more for her at a distance; and she then started for Aix-la-Chapelle (travelling under the title of the Comtesse d'Amboise), stopping at Liége on the way, and arriving at her destination on the 11th July.

She went first to the Maison Schleiden, in the Rue St. Jacques, but not finding this big enough, moved shortly to the Grand Hôtel Dubigk on the Comphausbad, where she retained a handsome suite of rooms for her own and her household's use. The little party immediately found itself surrounded by friends: M. de Clermont and the Marquis de Vaupalière, both good men and old friends of the Princesse, lodged near, and called upon her frequently; she felt, with a sense of relief, that she could at any moment throw herself upon their advice. Another encounter was somewhat embarrassing: it was discovered that Madame de Las Cases, who on a poor

excuse had left the Princesse three months sooner, was occupying the upper flat in the same hotel; but the Princesse accepted the situation with her usual kindness, informing the Marquise that she should always be glad to entertain her as a friend, though she must no longer consider herself a member of the household. Madame de Las Cases had with her a young nephew, a lieutenant in the French Navy, whom the Princesse had never met before, and in whom, as in many young people of both sexes, she took a deep and kindly interest. Needless to say, he adored her; and long afterwards, when sharing the exile of Napoleon at St. Helena, the Emperor conversed with him about many famous people of the *ancien régime*, and remarked that he had never seen the Princesse de Lamballe, the elderly man whom she had playfully called 'her young romancer' told warmly of her beauty, her kindness, her goodness to his then insignificant self, and the tragic destiny which already then seemed to have cast its shadow upon her.

Madame de Lâge was also charmed to find her dear friend 'Lusy' de Polastron at Aix, though just on the point of leaving for Coblentz and very anxious to carry Madame de Lâge off with her; the Princesse, however, perhaps a little piqued with jealousy, would not permit her to go. Coblentz and Spa were even gayer than Aix, and no doubt the lively Étiennette would have enjoyed the change, but she gave up the

idea for the present. Her counsel was that the Princesse should retire to her relatives at Turin, and she tried to persuade her to do so; but for some reason the Princesse remained very opposed to this. She felt if she once went there, she would be cut off from her French friends for ever, and buried in the little Italian town. 'It is all very well to talk!' she exclaimed, half vexed, one day; 'but you would not go there yourself.' 'O, O but what a horrible accusation!' cried the impulsive Étiennette. 'You know very well that the more sad and desolate you were, the more I would be with you!' And so the two women burst into tears and fell into one another's arms, and forgave the momentary ill-temper; but to tell truth, the Princesse was at her wits' end to know what she ought to do. M. de Clermont and M. de la Vaupalière seem to have thought her duty was to return to France immediately; on the other hand, she received constant letters from the Queen, couched in such language as, 'I know well that you love me, and I had no need of this fresh proof. What happiness it is to be loved for one's own self! Your attachment and that of a few other friends gives me strength.' And again, 'I am so happy, my dear Lamballe, to know that you are in safety in the terrible state of our affairs. Do not return; I know well your heart is true, and I do not wish you to come back. I bring every misfortune upon you. It is necessary to my peace that my friends should not

compromise themselves, for it would be endangering themselves without being of use to us. Do not add to my anxieties for all those I love. The King's brothers are unfortunately surrounded by ambitious and mistaken people. . . . I will confess, despite my courage, that I could be glad to die if it were not for my husband and children. . . . I weep for my family and friends, but not for myself. . . . Adieu, my dear heart; love me as I love you!—MARIE ANTOINETTE.' Notwithstanding these commands, the Princesse worried herself still, fearing that the Queen kept things back, that matters were worse than they appeared, that she ought not to remain apart from her friend. If there were no hope the royal family could escape, she would return and share everything with them, she asked no better; but if they could escape—and she was loth to give up all hope of it—she would be merely one more in the way. Gladly did she learn that Gustavus of Sweden had arrived at Spa, for at that time immense hope was placed in his help and championship for France; and she determined so soon as possible to journey over there and see him.

Despite the practical homelessness of most of the visitors at Aix, and the genuine anxiety they must have suffered concerning many of their relatives and friends, they seem to have contrived to form a merry and pleasant society among themselves in a quiet way: Madame de Lâge gives us lively pictures

of it in her letters and journal. The hotel, she says, was a nice house, and the rooms comfortable and convenient; it was situated in a fine street, near the Redoubt, and at an easy distance for the baths and the *rouge-et-noir* tables. 'Everybody goes to bed by eleven, and rises early. The Princesse allows little play in her rooms; and as we must have some amusement, a few of us slip over to the Redoubt when we think she will not know, either in the mornings or at four o'clock, when she is resting. The most curious set of people are there at such times—nearly all Jews. If we cannot leave the Princesse, we get my brother-in-law to play for us; but when we go with her in the evenings, we pass the tables without even looking at them: you would think we were quite strangers to the place.' She further assures her mother that she will not be ruined, for she has put aside one hundred louis for play and nothing else. But the charms of that invitation to Coblentz grew in the young Comtesse's mind, and at last the Princesse was obliged, rather reluctantly, to grant her permission to go—for three weeks. She stayed at the Convent of the Filles Sainte Marie, and enjoyed herself so enormously that the appointed time flew all too fast; and the handsome Comte d'Artois, always ready to flirt with her, and Madame de Polastron, her beloved friend, implored her to ask for an extension of leave; but she put it off till the 8th September, the very day

she should have left, and then, when it was too late to receive any answer, merely wrote to say she was staying a little longer. As a matter of fact, she did not return till the 22nd.

The Princesse was, naturally, very much vexed. She could not put off her visit to the King of Sweden any longer, so, taking Madame de Las Cases with her, she went to Spa for a few days, staying there at the Hôtel du Lion Noir in the Grand Place. She had many long talks with Gustavus, who, since she had last seen him, had had a revolution of his own to quell, but was none the less determined to do what he could in the wisest possible way to save France. As he bade her good-bye at the end of her visit, he said, 'You will see me again soon, but you must remember that for my part I am still bound by certain limits, certain considerations, and that mine is in fact the most delicate of *rôles*. Know that I, whom you will next see fighting at the head of the aristocracy of your country, am at home the first democrat of my nation.' But, alas! except for one or two occasions within the next few weeks, the Princesse never saw the gallant Gustavus more. The Swedish people had too much sympathy with the French to wish to take up arms against them, and the King merely made himself unpopular by his efforts. He was assassinated at a masked ball at Stockholm in the following March.

No doubt Madame de Lâge felt rather like a naughty little girl when she returned to Aix at the

end of September; but she was well punished for her truancy when she found that the Princesse, who received her somewhat coldly, had been to Spa without her. This was an expedition she had dearly wished to make, but she dared not now ask further leave to go alone. 'Yet I am told,' she writes lamentingly, 'that it is the only place in which one can forget the Revolution. There are seventeen princes and princesses there, and a King worth a thousand, while the little German princes don't count, for the place is simply paved with them.' Her grandmother died shortly after; and she philosophically remarks that fortunately this need not be very expensive, as black gloves and stockings with white and grey frocks are quite sufficient mourning for an old lady of eighty-eight, whom she had hardly ever seen: she had, in fact, sent most of her diamonds to be sold in Vienna while she was at Coblentz, in order to provide sufficient pretty toilettes for the gaieties there. The Princesse, perhaps to console her for the bereavement, relented from her displeasure sufficiently to take her to visit Charlemagne's Baths early in October; and Madame de Lâge was immensely interested, and describes the shrine and relics, the mantle and slippers the great King really wore, and 'which are now used only at the Emperor's coronation,' adding that the Princesse paid twelve louis for a little bit of sulphur taken just from the spot where the spring escaped—an expensive treasure, but one she liked to possess.

The small quarrel regarding the Coblentz visit rankled still, but Madame de Lâge had the pleasure of seeing the 'King worth a thousand' after all, for Gustavus returned the Princesse's visit, arriving at Aix on the 8th October, and she gave a great dinner for him on the following night. The Duchess of Cumberland was invited to it too, and was much insulted because the doors were not opened so widely for her as they had been for the King. Towards the close of the meal the Princesse made a half-laughing allusion to the absence without leave of her favourite lady during her own visit to Spa, and Étiennette, who had been feeling cross for no particular reason before, suddenly felt her ill-humour overflow, and coffee being almost immediately brought in, she sprang to her feet and went out on the balcony. Here she stood, viciously twisting a little charm she wore hung on a chain, till she felt an arm laid on hers—her friend Madame de Ginestous, no doubt. 'My dear,' she exclaimed, without looking round, 'how ridiculous the Princesse was just now!' Silence for a moment; then 'Why?' in a voice she had not expected. It was the Princesse herself.

Étiennette felt herself grow cold and absolutely speechless; she could not move. The Princesse retired, and a moment later M. de Clermont came out. 'Are you mad?' he exclaimed. 'Do you never reflect before you speak?' 'O my dear friend,' she implored, 'don't preach at me now! But how did

you know?'—'She has just told me what has happened. She said, "Go out on the balcony; you will find Madame de Lâge, whom I have just left a little embarrassed," and then she told me of your idiotic remark. She declared she was not very angry, only sorry that one she loved should speak of her so.'

Madame de Lâge was obliged to go in, as the night grew cold; but fortunately the room was full of people, and she made herself as amiable as she could to the guests, and kept as far as possible from the Princesse. But people began to go, the ranks thinned, and she felt in despair. Then 'She was perfect!' wrote the little Comtesse, describing the incident to her mother after. 'She called me to see to her work, saying she had mistaken a shade, and I was delighted, and sat down beside her under the canopy, with tears in my eyes. I could have hugged her, only there were still a few people there; and then she went early to bed so that there should be no embarrassing good-nights. Don't scold me, for indeed I am furious enough with myself, and well paid out for my temper; I hardly dare meet her eyes. All is pardon, and nothing said; you see I can't *say* "I am sorry I said I thought you were ridiculous!"'

So the little breeze blew over, but indeed there were few days left to brood over anything of such small importance. All through August and September the Princesse heard constantly from the Queen at

the Tuileries, the burden of her correspondence being always: 'Do not return, my dear Lamballe. I do not deceive myself: I leave all with God. Trust in my sincere friendship, and if you wish to give me a proof of your attachment, dear heart, take every care of your health, and do not think of returning.' 'How good you are, and what a sincere friend! I feel it deeply, and in the strength of my love for you I forbid you to return. Believe that my love for you will only cease with my life.' 'I have shown your letter to the King, as you wished: he bids me tell you he is enchanted to do anything to please you, and is quite vexed you did not ask him sooner.' One day the Queen sent her friend a ring containing some of her whitened hair, with the inscription '*Ils sont blanchis par le malheur*,' and from this ring the Princesse never after parted; it was found upon her body after death. One letter, given by Lescure, is especially remarkable for the Queen's allusions to M. de Provence, between whom and the King's party there was at this time little love lost, since his setting up of a semi-regal court at Coblentz, besides being dangerously compromising to the royal prisoners in Paris, was deeply resented by them.

'*July* 1791.

'You must not doubt, my dear heart, of the pleasure we have had in hearing of your happy arrival. In the new sorrows that surround us, it is

a consolation to know that those we love are in safety. I have not changed my mind on the subject of which I spoke to you, though things remain just the same. Be sure, my dear Lamballe, there is in that heart more self-love than affection for his brother, and certainly for me. His regret all his life has been not to have been born the master, and this fury to put himself in the most prominent position has only increased since our sorrows, which have afforded him the opportunity to push forward. But do not let us speak of our worries; let us speak of you. It is a subject both inexhaustible and more agreeable. Give me frequent news of you. The King has seen all your letters and is much touched. Adieu, dear heart; write that you always love me; I have much need of it. For me, you know that I cannot change.

'The King has this morning received a letter from M. de Penthièvre, and I re-open my letter to beg you to assure the Comtesse that her affair is already finished, and there was no need to write from so far. . . . Burn this letter.

'I re-open a second time at the King's, to tell you that I have received your second. Thanks, thanks, for him and for me. My friendship is unalterable. You are an angel.'

This is the letter said to have fallen, bloodstained, from the Princesse's hair at the time of her murder. The Comtesse mentioned in it is probably Madame de

Ginestous, for the caution necessary in correspondence is evidenced by the fact that in all the letters passing at this time between Madame de Lâge and her mother, the Princesse is spoken of always as 'my sister'; the Queen, 'her sister-in-law'; Madame de Ginestous, 'my good Comtesse'; M. de Provence, 'my cousin'; and M. d'Artois, 'my brother.'

A new Constitution was prepared for France, and on the 14th September the King signified his acceptance of it; the poor man could in fact do no other, though little attention was paid to his oath after the one he had sworn in July 1790, and his attempt to leave France a year later. The royal family were in fact by this time really prisoners. The guards on duty in the Palace were ordered never to lose sight of them for a moment; and even in bed at night the Queen's door must be left open that she might be watched by a soldier. It was difficult to find opportunity for a word in private between any two members of the family. After the signing of the new Constitution a little more liberty was allowed them, and there were some faint attempts at loyal cheerings when they drove through Paris that night to witness the illuminations; but it was very ephemeral. Still, the Princesse de Lamballe wrote constantly from Aix begging to be allowed to resume her duties, and still Marie Antoinette replied she must not dream of coming to Paris. A letter from the Queen, dated the 4th September 1791, runs:—

'I cannot go out, my dear Lamballe, without writing to you. Your letter gave me too much pleasure. I see your friendship too well. I am very sad and afflicted; the disorders never cease. I see audacity increasing among our enemies, and courage diminishing among honest men. One can only think from day to day with terrible fears for the morrow. No, once again, do not return, my dear heart. Do not throw yourself into the tiger's jaws. I suffer already too much uneasiness for my husband and my poor little children. . . . What you wished is done; the true and faithful person has carried off all the papers. Your other affair seems to be taking a better turn, but will be spoilt if you return.

'My daughter is well. You know how my poor little girl loves you, and also the *chou d'amour*, who is on my knees at this moment, and wants to write to you.' [Here follows the Dauphin's baby signature.] 'Adieu, my dear heart; your friendship is my consolation and my *only happiness*.'

The italics are the Queen's own.

In the beginning of October, however, the new provisions of the Constitution came into operation, and the Queen was requested to set her household in order, and dismiss all such members of it as had left France or were not able to fulfil their duties. Under this compulsion then, she wrote to her friend officially, requesting her immediately to resume her post as

Superintendent, or resign it; and this letter the Princesse received on the 13th October. She knew very well that the Queen had written under pressure, and probably still did not really wish her to return; but there is little question where her own heart lay, and though she still reserved a week or two for consideration and counsel with her friends, there was never any doubt as to the course that she would choose. She had always wished to return, and though the peremptoriness of this sudden command in contradiction to the many tender letters preceding it no doubt agitated her for the moment, she was really thankful to see her path plainly pointed out before her. 'The Queen wishes me,' she said to all who argued with her, 'and I must live and die with her.' But she would not act on impulse; she would look the whole situation fully in the face first. If she returned, she knew well that it was to certain danger and possible death; her own people implored her to come back to Turin and stay with them there in safety; but M. de Clermont and M. de la Vaupalière applauded and encouraged her in her resolve to go to the Queen.

On the 15th she made and signed her will, of which Lescure gives the following copy:—

'This is my Testament.

'In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

'I make and institute the Prince of Savoy-Carignan, my nephew, my heir and universal legatee of all my goods, personal and others, and, in his default, M. the Duc d'Enghien, my cousin on my mother's side.

'I beg M. de la Vaupalière and M. de Clermont-Gallerande to be my testamentary executors.

'I entreat the Queen to receive a mark of gratitude from one to whom she has given the precious title of "her friend," a title which has made my life happy, and which I have never used but to give her marks of affection and proofs of my sentiments towards herself, whom I have ever loved; these sentiments I shall cherish till my last breath. I beg her as a last favour to accept my repeater watch, to remind her of the hours which we have passed together; and also a Magdalen painted in enamel by Tournon.

'I give and bequeath to M. the Duc de Penthièvre, my father-in-law, the portrait of the Queen painted in enamel, with that of Louis XIV.,[1] also painted in enamel; and a ring of turquoises surrounded by diamonds, a ring which I beg him often to wear to remind him of my union with his family and my filial love for him.

'I give and bequeath to Madame the Duchesse d'Orléans, my sister-in-law, a breakfast-set with the lacquer box which holds it, a present which was made to me by the will of Madame the Comtesse de Toulouse; also a box in which are the portraits of her children, Messieurs de Chartres and de Montpensier. I flatter myself she will indeed regard these two legacies as a mark of friendship on my part.

'I give and bequeath to the Princesse de Carignan, my sister-in-law, my tassels of diamonds, and a ring of sapphire surrounded with diamonds, which will recall to her our mutual friendship and confidence.

'I give and bequeath to Madame the Princesse de Conty, my aunt, knowing her taste for paintings, a little picture painted in enamel, representing a peasant. I implore her acceptance of this mark of my tenderness for her.

'I give and bequeath to Madame de Kercado, my large green writing-desk and the clock which stands in my room. I beg of this tender friend that this clock shall be placed in the room she occupies most, that it may recall me to her memory every hour.

[1] The Duc's grandfather.

'I give and bequeath to Madame de Brunoy, two pictures, one representing Melancholy and the other Happiness. I hope that this last will recall to her what I have felt in being loved by her.

'I give and bequeath to Madame de Vauban my large writing-table of yellow wood.

'I give and bequeath to Madame de Luynes all my books printed by Didot and bound by Deromme.

'I give and bequeath to M. de Choiseul-Gouffier my English boxes bound with steel: and I wish that they should be delivered to him unopened, as a mark of my friendship and confidence in him.

'I give and bequeath to M. de la Vaupalière and M. de Clermont-Gallerande, my two testamentary executors, all my chests.

'I give and bequeath to M. de Ségur (the elder) the *Voyages de Naples et des deux Siciles*, bound by Deromme.

'I give and bequeath to the Chevalier de Durfort, my Encyclopædia.

'I give and bequeath to the Baronne de Montboissier, a coffer in lacquer, with drawers, in which my papers were kept.

'I give and bequeath to Madame de Donissan, a table given me by the Queen, made in precious wood, with cameos mounted in *ormoulou*; and I feel that, coming from a dear hand, I cannot dispose of this better than in transmitting it to my intimate friend.

'I give and bequeath to Madame de Las Cases, my lady of honour, my *breakfast à thé*, with table and all complete, and an annuity to the value of half her appointment.

'I give and bequeath to Madame Delâge-Volude, an annuity to the value of half her appointment.

'I give and bequeath to Madame de Ginestous, my service of Sèvres porcelain, and an annuity to the value of half her appointment.

'I give and bequeath to Madame de Brunoy, my large sofa of mahogany wood, with the screen.

'I give and bequeath to M. d'Yanville, my master of horse, an annuity of 1200 francs, with two horses and my best carriage.

'I give and bequeath to my three women of the bedchamber, my wardrobe, to be divided equally amongst them, and an annuity of 800 francs to each.

'I give and bequeath to Mdlle. Mertin, my first woman, my unmade dresses and my lace, to be divided with my third woman.

'I give and bequeath to my woman of the wardrobe, an annuity of 600 francs, and to share with my other women my court dresses.

'I give and bequeath to my under-woman of the wardrobe, if she is still in my service, an annuity of 300 francs: if not, a year of her wages and board as a gratuity.

'I give and bequeath to Chevalier, my valet de chambre, an annuity of 800 francs.

'I give and bequeath to Magnat, an annuity of 800 francs.

'I give and bequeath to my other valets de chambre a year's wages as a gratuity.

'I give and bequeath to my footmen a gratuity of a year's wages each; and to those who shall have been ten years in my service, an annuity of 400 francs.

'I give and bequeath to Aza an annuity of 600 francs, and a year's wages and board, and also an annuity of 150 francs to take care of my dogs, this annuity to cease at the death of the dogs.

'I give and bequeath to the men of my household who have fulfilled their years of service with me, annuities of 500 francs to the upper servants, and 300 francs to the lower; and those who have not stayed so long, both upper and lower, gratuities in proportion to the time they shall have served.

'I give and bequeath to my treasurer an annuity of 1000 livres.

'With regard to all pensions made in my lifetime to the people of my household, such as my doctor, M. Saiffert, and

others, it is my wish that these pensions shall be continued to them.

'I give and bequeath 2000 francs to be paid at once to my old nurse.

'I give and bequeath 3000 francs to be paid at once to the Hôtel Dieu.

'I wish to be buried with the greatest simplicity, and not by a priest who has taken the new oath, nor in a parish under the new regulations.

'I wish my body to be kept for three days after death, and that my doctor or surgeon should examine me during the three days.

'As I leave some property in lands, I desire that these should be sold, and the money invested in such a manner that the interest shall pay these annuities, and as the annuities become extinct, then the heirs shall enjoy the funds.

'This testament is made at Aix la Chapelle, to-day the 15th October 1791.

MARIE THÉRÈSE LOUISE DE SAVOIE.'

Madame de Las Cases offered to accompany her former mistress; but 'No, my dear,' said the Princesse very sweetly; 'no doubt your health still requires the waters, and as Mesdames de Ginestous and De Lâge, who have never left me, are still sufficiently devoted to wish to return with me, I shall take them.' But as a matter of fact she did not take either. The ill-fated visit to Coblentz had put Madame de Lâge more beyond possibility of usefulness than she had realised at the time; it would not be possible for any lady straight from the *émigrés* court to be received at the Tuileries, and she must, therefore, remain at Aix. Madame de

Ginestous could have gone, but until she saw for herself how matters stood, the Princesse was loth to carry her young companion into danger, and therefore left her also, promising, however, to send for her shortly. Young Lieutenant de Las Cases implored to be allowed to accompany her, but him too she would not take. He must write to her, and she to him, and she thenceforth called him 'her novelist,' in honour of the charming and graphic letters he wrote her every other day: but they never met again.

On Saturday, the 20th October, Madame de Lamballe left Aix alone, and started back 'into the tiger's jaws.'

CHAPTER XVI

1791-2

THE Paris newspapers of November 4th announce the return of Madame de Lamballe: and she must indeed have been shocked when her eyes first fell upon the altered appearance of her friend, and when she discovered the miserable state in which the royal family were living at the Tuileries.

The Queen's hair had become quite white, her eyes sunken, her face haggard: the children wore silent, anxious looks little suited to their years: the King, poor inarticulate Louis, crushed with humiliation, scarcely spoke, but pressed her hand with a fervour that showed his pleasure in seeing her again. She too had to submit to the constant watching, now the lot of every member of the household. On pretext that the chapel was too far from the royal apartments, a wooden altar had been set up in the Gallerie de Diane, and mass was only allowed to be celebrated there. Her old apartments in the Pavilion de Flore were again set at the Princesse's disposal, but before settling finally down at the Tuileries, she

went on a few days' visit to her father-in-law, who lay ill at his castle at Anet.

M. de Penthièvre had now his daughter and his friend M. de Miromesnil living entirely with him; but in spite of the universal love and respect in which he was held, eddies of the revolution had even touched the quiet waters of his life. His arms, hung up in St. Eustache, the parish church of his great town house, the Hôtel de Toulouse, had been violently torn down and burnt; and it was reported to him that the Jacobins had grudgingly remarked that they knew he gave half his wealth to the poor, but it would be much better if he gave it all, as then they would receive double. 'Their arithmetic is correct,' was the old Duc's only reply to this, with a faint smile. In obedience to a decree commanding that all orders of honour or nobility be given up, he quietly renounced his, 'without,' he said, 'regret. These things flattered me in my youth; but I am accustomed to them now, and think no more of them. If the suppression of them can make France happy, may God be praised!' He was even ready to relinquish his title, but must, he said, have some name, and was puzzled what to call himself. Citoyen Penthièvre was hardly correct, and Citoyen Bourbon might be thought presumptuous. But, as a matter of fact, all these considerations were quite extraneous, and his life in the main still the quiet, peaceful existence he had always loved. What longing

memories it must have called up to the Princesse during her visit! She could remain only four days; and the night before she left, the Duc remarked sorrowfully and almost prophetically to his faithful valet, 'I praise much my daughter-in-law's attachment for the Queen: she makes a great sacrifice in returning to her. I tremble lest she should fall a victim to it.'

Once settled at the Tuileries, the Princesse did her utmost to make things cheerful at court, or so much of the old court as could be called together. Most of its members were either ill, dead, or away; many of the shops were closed; all gaiety, except of the lowest and most brutal sort, seemed to have forsaken the gay city. In the end of November the Comte d'Amblimont, father of Madame de Lâge, passed a few days in Paris on his way to his daughter at Aix, and supped with the Princesse one night, afterwards attending the King's *coucher*. She wrote, at the Queen's request, to many of the *émigrés*, urging their return, and on the margin of some of her notes are added the words: 'I am at her elbow, and repeat the necessity of your return, if you love your King, your religion, your government, and your country. Return! Return! Return!—MARIE ANTOINETTE.' It is almost impossible to understand how such letters could meet with a refusal. This matter of the *émigrés* was in fact the sorest of questions, and made the family the more unhappy since they were not at

one upon it. The King and Queen felt bitterly now that if the nobility had remained by them, they would at least have a party in Paris, if a small one; but now they stood absolutely alone, while their so-called friends enjoyed makeshift frivolities at Coblentz, and paid assiduous court to the King's brothers. Most unfortunate of all was it that Madame Elizabeth's sympathies were entirely with her second brother, and her character being of a strange firmness in comparison with the King's, she spoke her thoughts deliberately, and made no attempt to conceal them. 'Our family life is like hell,' the Queen wrote to Count Fersen this winter. 'It is not possible to speak a word with the best intention in the world. My sister is so outspoken, so guided by designing men here, and so strongly influenced by her brothers abroad, that we cannot talk to each other without being at strife the whole day long.' No doubt, if Elizabeth had been the man, she would have made a better fight for it than Louis, but, as it was, she has left a splendid example to the world of loyalty without conviction, for she died for the King-brother in whose cause she did not believe.

Paris had never suited Madame de Lamballe, even in the days when she could refresh herself by frequent absences to the country; and spite of her determined cheerfulness now, the closeness in which she was kept preyed terribly upon her spirits. '*La bonne Lam-*

balle, who seems only to have waited for danger to show all she is worth,' wrote Marie Antoinette to the Duchesse de Polignac this December, 'is a little ill from not being able to go out without being assailed by atrocious epithets. For myself, I have no need of fresh air, and find it sufficient to stand at the window sometimes.' One of the Princesse's own notes, '*au cousin E.*,' evidently her young knight Las Cases, must have been written about now, and in it, after rather sad attempts at badinage, she remarks: 'I thank you for your political descriptions; I find them perfect, and my novelist gives me much pleasure. He will always do so if he will continue, for I am delighted in my dungeon to know what passes at a distance. . . . I repeat again all my thanks. The post presses.' The poor lady was soon to know more of a real dungeon than her pretty if restricted apartments in the Pavilion de Flore. 'Her small silver voice,' wrote Carlyle; 'what can it profit in that piping of the black world-tornado?'

Madame de Lamballe was the first to send her good wishes for the New Year to the King and Queen at the opening of 1792, the last year of her life. Clouds were gathering about her, and already she was an object of hatred and suspicion to Pétion, the new Mayor of Paris in the place of Bailly. He objected to the Queen going to tea or supper in the Princesse's apartments, and to satisfy him, the two friends were obliged to meet only while the Queen was dressing,

and then but in semi-private. The royal family dared not offend the Mayor or any prominent member of the National Assembly, and they could scarcely speak to the people they wished to thank and conciliate, for fear of drawing suspicion upon them. Certain of the *émigrés* had returned, M. de Clermont and Madame de Ginestous had joined the Princesse, and as much as possible, she influenced others who were still intending to start, and induced them to remain. Emigration was equally unpopular with the nation and the court, for those who left took all their wealth with them, and money flowed out of the country like water. Madame de la Rochejaquelin, in her *Mémoires*, gives an interesting account of these months, and the desperate anxiety with which the Queen and the Princesse endeavoured to keep all the loyal folk they could about them. She herself, a girl of nineteen, god-daughter to the King and Madame Victoire, had recently married her first husband the Marquis de Lescure, and in February 1792 they decided to join the emigrants, informing them of their resolve, and going to Paris on their way.

'I could not be presented to the King,' writes Madame de la Rochejaquelin, 'as since his Majesty had come to Paris all presentations had been suspended. I went to the Tuileries, *chez* Madame la Princesse de Lamballe. She was the most intimate friend of my mother, and she received me as if I had been her daughter. Next day M. de Lescure went

to the Tuileries. The Queen condescended to say to him, "I know you have brought Victorine: there is no court now, but I wish to see her notwithstanding. Let her come to-morrow at noon to the Princesse de Lamballe's." Lescure gave me this flattering order, and I went to the Princesse. The Queen embraced me, and we all withdrew into a closet; and after some words full of goodness, her Majesty said to me, "And you, Victorine, what do you intend to do? I suspect you are come here for the purpose of emigrating." I replied it was the intention of Lescure; but that he would remain at Paris if he thought he could be useful to his Majesty. The Queen reflected for some time and said to me, in a very serious tone: "He is a good subject: he has no ambition; let him remain." I replied to the Queen that her orders were laws. She spoke to me afterwards of her children. "It is a long time since you have seen them; come to-morrow at six to Madame de Tourzel's, and I will bring my daughter there." She at that time found consolation in superintending the education of Madame Royale, and Madame de Tourzel had the charge only of M. le Dauphin.

'After the departure of the Queen, Madame la Princesse de Lamballe expressed to me how much she rejoiced in the reception I had met with. I said I felt the full value of it, and that Lescure would certainly remain. She recommended the greatest secrecy upon what had passed.'

Great attention was paid to the young couple: every day M. de Lescure went to the Tuileries, and every day the Queen made a point of addressing him personally. He was, however, soon much blamed for not joining the *émigré* party as he had announced his intention of doing, particularly as the change occurred just two days after the publication of the decree for confiscating the property of those who left France. His bride became very indignant that this circumstance should have been supposed to have influenced him, and implored the Princesse to speak again to the Queen, that they might have her direct desire as a reason for remaining. It was not safe at this time to write letters, so the Queen commanded the Princesse to repeat her answer word for word. It ran thus, 'I have nothing more to say to M. de Lescure: it is for him to consult his conscience, his duty, his honour; but he ought to remember that the defenders of a throne are always in their proper place when near their King.' This satisfied the Lescures, who found means to let the *émigrés* know that they had received private orders. They lodged very quietly at the Hôtel Diesbach, received no company, and were as often as possible at the Tuileries.

Gustavus of Sweden and his gallant follower Count Fersen were still deeply anxious to keep in touch with the King and Queen. Fersen had written in November to Marie Antoinette, 'Answer me as to the possi-

bility of our meeting, quite alone, without servants, in case I get orders from the King. He has expressed his wishes to me on the subject': but the Queen, terrified lest he should be discovered after his share in the flight to Varennes, implored him not to risk it; and it was not till the evening of February 14th that he saw her again. He then understood that it was impossible for the royal family to make any further attempt to escape, and that if help came at all it must come from without, with which message he hastened back to his King. The Queen's brother, Leopold of Austria, lukewarm though he had long been in his sister's cause, now at last under pressure of public opinion, joined the Kings of Sweden, Spain, and Prussia in an alliance to deliver the King and Queen of France; and no sooner had he done so than he died suddenly, on the 10th March, it was whispered by poison. A week later, Gustavus was assassinated in Stockholm. 'This is a bullet,' gasped the dying Swede ruefully, 'that will delight the Jacobins of Paris.'

It did more: it quenched the last faint ray of hope by which the Queen and her friends had been comforted. Yet 'We must be courageous!' she said to Madame de Tourzel. She was not permitted to wear mourning for her brother; but there were more important things than this to grieve over. Leopold's successor was a sickly youth of four-and-twenty, but still blood kin to the Queen, and he might yet be

induced to help her. Wild tales were circulated concerning an 'Austrian Committee' said to meet in Madame de Lamballe's rooms, with the object of encouraging the invasion of France, a second Bartholomew, and the destruction of the People's new-found liberty: but plots, if plots there were, were not alone on the side of the Royalists. In March the Princesse wrote to M. de Breteuil of an intention to carry off the Queen, divorce her from the King, and imprison her in a convent; and Marie Antoinette sat up all one night burning letters that might compromise her friends in case any such plot should take effect. There was talk too of forcing the King to have the Dauphin brought up under a revolutionary tutor, for which post the afterwards notorious Robespierre was named: and it is even pretended that Madame de Lamballe's influence was gained in favour of this plan, and that she spoke of it to the King, who first exclaimed, 'You cannot think of such a thing, *ma cousine*!' but afterwards consented, if Robespierre would work privately in his, the King's, interests. To this, the story says, the 'sea-green incorruptible' agreed, and even wrote a pamphlet *Le Défenseur de la Constitution*, in the King's favour, foreseeing glory for himself in the connection; but when at the last moment the arrangement was broken to the Queen, she flatly refused to permit it; and so the plan fell through, the pamphlet was withdrawn, and Robespierre cherished a secret

and deadly hatred of the Princesse, who he considered had wilfully misled and humiliated him.

There may have been some grain of truth in certain of these stories; but if most of them were traced to an origin, it would have been found in the Palais Royal, where Orléans, like some huge spider, sat spinning venom to enmesh his former friends. After the miserable return from Varennes, one section of the popular party had proposed making him King in his cousin's stead, but the Duc, with wit to see that such a position was the least enviable in Christendom, promptly replied that 'So long as the King was in France there could be no other ruler'; and further voluntarily renounced all hereditary claim upon the throne, and announced that he had joined the bourgeois class for ever. Louis XVI., hoping against hope that this conduct implied a tardy loyalty, now at last consented to an attempt at peaceful relations with Orléans, granted him that Grand Admiralship he had coveted so long, and allowed Bertrand de Moleville to arrange an interview between them, which passed off in an entirely satisfactory manner. After the Duc's departure, the King assured de Moleville that he believed him to be honestly doing all he could to repair the evil that had been worked in his name and for which he had perhaps not been so culpable as was generally supposed: but unfortunately the rest of the court was not informed of this partial reconciliation; and when Orléans presented himself the

following Sunday at the King's levée, his appearance was regarded only as an insult, an impertinence, and a presumption. He was hustled towards the door, and finding it impossible to pass, turned to the Queen's apartments, where the tables were laid; when instantly the cry went up, 'Keep him away from the dishes! He means to poison them!' Furious at this treatment, which he chose to believe had been expressly organised by the Queen and her court to show their contempt for him, he descended the staircase without waiting to see a single member of the royal family, rage and spite painted upon his face; and as he went, some zealous courtiers, regarding him as the King's arch-enemy, spat upon his head and shoulders, an insult which he never afterwards forgave. Henceforth, Orléans was implacable.

Tardy though they were, the preparations made by the new young sovereign of Austria and his friends for the deliverance of the royal family of France roused fury and indignation among the excited populace. They insisted upon taking the offensive and being the first to declare war, and Louis XVI., whose spare time and that of his family was spent in writing cipher letters to Vienna and Coblentz imploring a speedy invasion, was forced himself publicly to announce war as his own wish and decision against these, his only friends. The declaration was made on the 20th April, and there were tears in the unhappy King's eyes as he made it: nothing could have been

more hateful to his own honest nature than this double part which circumstances obliged him to play. Orléans and his sons watched him grimly from their seats as he spoke. But the best generals of the country were with the *émigrés*, and hostilities began with defeat and humiliation for France, further enraging the people.

There was no question of St. Cloud this Easter, but early in May the Princesse de Lamballe snatched a few days to hasten to Anet and visit her father-in-law. It was the last time they met, and she stayed six days with him. The same day she left Paris, the Prince de Lambesc started for England, and her enemies took advantage of the circumstance to spread it abroad that it was she who had again left the country, a manifest lie easily disproved, but which left its sting nevertheless. More subtle was another plot against her, emanating with very little doubt from the Palais Royal. Regnault de St. Jean d'Angély, a member of the Assembly, was one day mysteriously invited by his colleague, Richer de Serizy, in Madame de Lamballe's name, to attend a committee in her rooms on the following Friday, with the intimation that Malouet, Montmorin, and Bertrand de Moleville would be there. It was of course supposed that Regnault would indignantly refuse and merely spread the tale of his invitation to the Princesse's discredit; but although a revolutionary he was also something of a tuft-hunter, and being a vain creature and

totally unacquainted with the Princesse, thought he should like to go, and even bragged to Malouet of his 'conquest.' Malouet stared at him, said he did not himself know Madame de Lamballe, that there was no committee, and that Regnault had very evidently been made a dupe; further calling upon Bertrand de Moleville, who promptly sent a messenger to the Princesse at Anet, and received the reply that she too was absolutely ignorant of the whole business. Bertrand insisted on inquiring thoroughly into the report, and entirely dissipated the fabulous 'Austrian Committee' story; but of a hundred who had heard the original rumour, not ten knew of its denial; and the mischief, so far as the Princesse was concerned, was irrevocably accomplished.

The people of France, more and more exultant and uncontrolled as they tasted power, pressed further and further measures upon the reluctant prisoner whom they still derisively called their King; the Constitution, it is true, gave him the privilege of vetoing any decree of which he did not approve, but it was never expected that he would exercise it. The three Girondist members, however, Roland, Clavière, and Servan, passed two decrees in the last week of May which he could not and would not sanction. One was that all priests refusing to swear to the new Constitution of the Church should be immediately banished from the kingdom; the other that an army of twenty thousand men should be brought up from

the provinces and permanently encamped outside Paris. The Queen and her friends were even more strongly opposed to both these measures than himself: they regarded the priests who had sworn to the new Constitution as no better than renegades, and saw no reason why the King should wilfully surround himself with enemies. After a few weeks' consideration, therefore, Louis, who had borne much, decided to assert himself at last, put his veto on both decrees, and dismissed the three Ministers.

This was on the 15th June, and instantly the people rose in fury. They understood very well that it was the Queen who had exercised her influence in the matter, and bestowed upon her another opprobrious epithet, that of 'Madame Veto.' After five days' ferment, early on the morning of the 20th, thousands of the poorest, roughest, and most brutal of them carried a huge Lombardy poplar, which they called their 'Tree of Liberty,' to the Tuileries, where they announced their intention of planting it on the terrace. The magistrates of Paris tried to stop them, but in vain; they had a couple of cannon with them, and their numbers were augmenting every moment. Warning was sent to the Tuileries, and when the procession arrived, the gates were shut and the National Guard on duty, so the tree had to be planted in a neighbouring convent garden instead. The people, however, hoped the King would come out to be insulted, and waited all day to see him, but he did

not appear. Then, late in the afternoon, a door was burst open, the mob rushed in, hoarse and savage with fatigue and fury, and the royal household lay at its mercy.

It was the first time the King and his people had come face to face at such close quarters, and he expected nothing less than death from them. They burst into the room where he sat: his attendants had just time to pull up a table across a deep bow-window for his protection, and the procession passed before him, streaming on through the royal apartments of the Tuileries till it reached the room at some distance where the Queen, with a similar poor defence, sat with her ladies and her children. Her first cry when she had heard of the mob being in the Palace was that she must go to her husband, her place was by his side. It would not have been possible for her to reach him; and Madame de Lamballe cried quickly, 'No, no, Madame, your place is with your children!' a sentiment the Queen knew to be just. They pulled a table up before her chair too, and she took the frightened little Dauphin on her knee, while Madame Royale stood beside her, and the Princesse de Lamballe leaned over the back of her seat. The others present were the Princesse de Tarente, Madame de Tourzel, the Duchesse de Maillé, the Marquise de Laroche-Aymon, Mesdames de Machau, de Soucy, de Ginestous, and a few gentlemen.

For three long hours the screaming, furious people passed before that window, stopping often to argue and shout horrible words at the unhappy Marie Antoinette and her friends, showing with ghastly joy the horrid trophies they carried: a gibbet with a little doll hanging and the Queen's name attached; a bullock's heart with a sword through it, labelled 'The Aristocrat's heart'; a rod marked 'For Marie Antoinette'; a guillotine, with at its foot the words, 'The People's instrument of justice for tyrants. Down with Veto and his wife!' Other and worse symbols: a cap of liberty which the Queen must needs place on her little son's head; and always the hoarse rancour of a savage and hating people. Many of their words she answered; and some she convinced she was not the Messalina they supposed her; but every moment of the time was tense with dread. Madame de Ginestous, describing the occasion to her friend Madame de Lâge after, said that the feeling with all was that if the Queen had shown one moment's weakness, she would have been struck, and that the first blow would have been the signal for a general massacre. She was wonderful, 'but,' said the lady, 'Madame de Lamballe displayed even greater courage. Standing during the whole of that long scene, leaning upon the Queen's chair, she seemed only occupied with the dangers of that unhappy princess without regarding her own.'

It was eight that night before the Tuileries was

empty, and the unhappy family, trembling and exhausted, met once more: the Queen, it was said, had aged twenty years in that one afternoon. Neither she nor the King could sleep for weeks after: they would whisper to each other through the night, 'Art thou still there—and the children?' fearing always that one at least might be murdered ere the dawn.

Madame de la Rochejaquelin has given in her *Mémoires* some account of the attack as seen from without, and of the days which followed. 'On the 20th June,' she says, 'I went alone to the Princesse de Lamballe's. I was in court mourning on account of the death of the Emperor, which had already exposed some persons to insult from the people. But the carriage could not penetrate further than the Carrousel. The crowd was immense. I saw the populace disarm and ill-treat the guards of the King. The gates of the Tuileries were shut; nobody could get in, and I withdrew without having been observed.

'The summer passed away nearly in this manner. Lescure was always at the Tuileries, or in public places, even among the mob, disguising himself to judge better of the state of the public mind. As for me, I shunned society. I went but seldom even to the Princesse de Lamballe's, yet saw all her uneasiness and distress. Never was there a person more courageously devoted to the Queen: to her

she made the sacrifice of her life. A short time before the 10th of August, she said to me, "As the danger augments, I feel more strength. I am ready to die—I fear nothing!" She had not a thought that was not for the King and Queen. Her father-in-law the Duc de Penthièvre adored her. She had shown him the most tender attention, and he died of the anguish occasioned by her cruel death.'

CHAPTER XVII

1792

All Frenchmen who had not completely lost their heads were shocked and horrified at this disgraceful outbreak of the 20th June. A petition, signed by twenty thousand people and presented by Lafayette, was made to the Assembly to ensure the future safety of the King by removing him to Rouen; but Lafayette was not in favour at court, and the King and Queen refused with fatal folly to listen to any proposal he might make. The only result of the occasion, therefore, was that Pétion the Mayor was made angry at having been found incompetent to keep peace, and that proof was afforded how entirely out of hand the people had become, and how impossible it would be to control them if they chose to take matters into their own hands again.

Not the court alone dreaded the 14th July, when once more the wretched travesty was to be performed of the King renewing his oath upon the 'Altar of the Country.' On this occasion the Princesse de Lamballe drove in the first carriage with the King and Queen, Madame Elizabeth, and the royal children;

but they were received with threatening cries, *ça iras*, and defiant shouts of 'Long live Pétion!' the King having dismissed Pétion two days before, and the people immediately re-elected him in office. This time the King had to proceed on foot from the École Militaire, where his family sat, to the 'Altar' to take his oath; and so immense and rough was the crowd that it was nearly an hour before soldiers could force a way for him to pass. The Queen watched him through her glasses in an agony of terror, fearing that he would never return in safety; but he did. Many people besides Madame de Staël have said that on this occasion, perhaps the most truly heroic of his life, he resembled nothing so much as a victim offering himself for sacrifice. Close to the altar stood a huge tree—on which were hung models of the royal crown, the coronets, arms, and insignia of all the princes, nobles, and clerical dignitaries of France—which the people chose to call the Tree of Feudalism. The King was invited to set fire to this, but he escaped the humiliation by replying that 'Feudalism no longer exists in France.' This was the last public appearance of Louis XVI. till his execution.

So entirely merged was the life of Madame de Lamballe at this time in the interests of her royal friends, that all she suffered can only be indicated in thus describing their terrors and trials. Her chief companion in the palace after the Queen was

the Princesse de Tarente la Tremouille, a noble and courageous lady a few years younger than herself, so equally devoted to the royal service that when her period of waiting had expired, she would borrow a room from Madame de Tourzel in order that it should not be necessary for her to leave the Tuileries. She dined and supped frequently with Madame de Lamballe, and afterwards the mere fact of her having done so put her in great danger, and she was closely questioned concerning whom she met, and on what the conversation turned, during these visits. The old accusation against our unfortunate Princesse of plots and intrigues was never forgotten.

Meanwhile Madame de Lâge had spent the winter and spring at Aix in company with her father, husband, brother-in-law, and friends, and had as usual made the best of life there, though often deeply concerned about her beloved Princesse in Paris, whom she might not join. Her mother and three little girls were, however, in Bordeaux, and when, towards the end of July, news reached her of the serious illness of the Comtesse d'Amblimont, she at once decided that she must travel thither. Every one tried to dissuade her from doing so, even, which seems strange, her father: but she was not to be moved, and taking Paris on her way, arrived at the capital on the 28th July. She had sent word to the Princesse that she was coming, but only received in reply a hasty note bidding her not go to the Hôtel

de Toulouse, as the concierge there was not to be trusted; so she went instead to the Hôtel d'Orléans in the Rue du Parc Royal, so loyal a little house that she, arriving in the regulation '*bonnet rouge*' and national uniform, was at first informed there was no room for her; but after a private interview with the manageress, she was allowed an attic, and here an hour later Madame de Ginestous joined her. The Princesse had sent many loving messages, but could not at present leave the Tuileries, as her every step was watched; and Étiennette must on no account dream of joining her there. When the Queen had heard of her arrival, she had exclaimed, 'Good heavens! don't let her come here: every one will know she comes from Coblentz, and she will compromise me fearfully': but later Madame de Ginestous was able to explain matters more fully to her Majesty, who listened kindly enough. It was a strange and dreary return to Paris the gay; but being young women and old friends, and, moreover, both of French blood, the two managed to make the best of things, and Madame de Ginestous remained to a late hour, sitting on the bed, and laughing over the merry past, and what sorry flashes of humour she could extract from the melancholy present.

Madame de Lâge stayed three days in Paris, and on the last evening, the 31st, the Princesse managed to escape observation for a few hours, and came alone with Madame de Ginestous in a common fiacre

to visit her at nine o'clock. 'This was probably the only time in her life,' says Étiennette, 'that she went out in this way without any servant. She remained with me late into the night, and it was the last time I ever saw her.' Very touching was the meeting. Like every one else at the time, the Princesse thought Paris the safest place in France, and dreaded that her 'child' should go alone to Bordeaux: she made her promise, in case of her mother's death, that she would return with her children, and hide in the capital till the worst was over: she would make arrangements for her; and Étiennette agreed. The Princesse herself, she says, was not at all afraid; she said things were not nearly so bad as they seemed, that the King had plenty of partisans, but would not accept succour; and that she for one had the fullest faith in his powers of decision. Madame de Ginestous, who hovered in and out of the room during the conversation, was not so hopeful. But at last the visitor must go, with many tears and embraces, and promises to write. 'She did indeed write to me,' says Étiennette, 'but her letter was dated the 8th August, and it did not reach me until she was already in prison.'

The long, hot days in Paris dragged on, the strain of anxiety grew tenser, the people more wildly excitable and uncontrolled. After the Federation Fête, most of the troops had been disbanded as too loyal, and, except for the Swiss Guards (who were insufficiently supplied with cartridges), the Tuileries was

surrounded by National Guards, among them some of the royal family's fiercest enemies. There were rumours of an intended attack on the 9th August, and the defence of the palace was intrusted to M. de Mandat, an honourable man, who sincerely wished to carry out his trust efficiently. All day excitement reigned in Paris, and anxiety in the palace; but nothing happened before evening. Every loyal gentleman in the capital—and there were but seven hundred of them, and those mostly old and infirm—gathered in the Tuileries to defend the King and Queen with their lives if need be; but weapons were few, and the King would give no orders. The night was fearfully hot, and the rooms densely crowded with all these voluntary helpers—the 'knights of the dagger'; every window was open, and suddenly through the heavy air came the clash and clang of bells as steeple after steeple broke out into pealing noise. It was the signal for insurrection.

No one slept that night in the palace, though a few retired to their rooms and lay down for a while. At four in the morning Mandat was sent for to the Hôtel de Ville, where the National Assembly had been sitting all night; but fearing some treachery, he gave his son the orders he had received from Pétion before he went. He was right. The entire Government had been changed during the night, more moderate measures withdrawn, the people in the ascendant, and he was immediately ordered under

arrest. Before he could be taken to prison, the mob set upon and murdered him, stripping his body in search of the orders which they could not find, and flinging his corpse into the Seine.

Roused by the sound of shots, the Princesse de Lamballe rose again and sought the Queen, whom she found with Madame Elizabeth and a few more in the King's room. The troops having lost their commander, it was doubtful how they would act; and Louis was urged to go forth and review them himself in the hopes that their personal loyalty might even at this eleventh hour be thus aroused. He consented, but heavily, and with little energy or interest. 'I have no hope,' the Queen said to her ladies; but they followed the King with their eyes as he walked slowly and silently along the frowning ranks of the already contemptuous soldiers. Some few cried faintly, '*Vive le Roi!*' but white and speechless, he paid them no attention, and their voices were soon drowned in the roars of '*Vive la Nation!*' and the shouted insults on every side. A few brave ringing words might have done much even now, but Louis XVI. was unhappily incapable of them: the sense of drama was absent from his composition. He returned to the palace, and shut himself up in his own room. 'We have lost everything,' said the Queen in despair.

It was now evident that the Tuileries would shortly be besieged; and that from the Swiss Guards and the loyal gentlemen, all inadequately armed, alone

was defence to be looked, since the National Guards had proved themselves foes rather than friends. Two battalions only, the *Filles de St. Thomas* and the *Petits Pères*, remained faithful, and were hurriedly sent for; and soon after six in the morning the Princesse de Lamballe, accompanied by M. de Clermont and Madame de Ginestous, went down for the last time to the Pavilion de Flore, and looked out of her windows on to the Pont Royal in search of them. The Princesse, broken-hearted at the disastrous results of that hopeless review, wore sorrowful looks, and Madame de Ginestous, to cheer her, took her hand and exclaimed, 'The sun has risen, and let us hope this is the day of deliverance. See! there is the battalion of the *Filles de St. Thomas*; they come to support us, and the King's party is larger than ever. All will go well, Madame——'

'My dear, my dear,' said the Princesse sadly, 'nothing can save us. I believe that we are lost.'

'*O mon Dieu!*' cried poor little Madame de Ginestous, as easily frightened as she was elated, 'do you then doubt the King's resolve? Is he no longer determined to put himself at the head of his party? Certainly we are lost if he fails us——'

M. de Clermont, however, broke in, and put courage into both. He had no doubt of success; and they returned to the Queen's salon more hopefully. If indeed there had been no cause to doubt the King's resolve, something might yet have been done; but

he had set his face against bloodshed, and forbade his defenders to fire a single shot. His principles were excellent, no doubt, but he might as well have flourished them in the face of a city full of tigers. Roederer, the magistrate of the district, hurried over to the palace, said that he could not answer for the temper of the people, and implored the King and Queen and their children to go straight to the Legislative Assembly close at hand, and take refuge there. It was tantamount to desertion of all their most loyal friends, and the Queen cried passionately that she would be nailed to the wall first. But the King listened vacantly, at last saying, with a sigh: 'Let us go,' and she was obliged to obey. 'Will you answer for the persons of the King and of my son if we do?' she asked Roederer, and he replied, 'Madame, I will promise to die at your side. I can do no more.'

The Princesse de Lamballe and Madame de Tourzel were alone allowed to accompany the royal family: all others must be left to deadly danger. At seven o'clock in the morning, the party came out by the centre door of the Tuileries, M. de Bachmann, Major of the Swiss Guards, walking first through two ranks of his soldiers, M. de Poix at a little distance just before the King, then the Queen leading the Dauphin, Madame Royale and Madame Elizabeth arm-in-arm, Madame de Lamballe and Madame de Tourzel last. The Dauphin was kicking up the dead leaves as he

went: they had fallen early that year. 'I was in the garden,' says M. de la Rochefoucauld, one of the loyal gentlemen, 'near enough to offer my arm to Madame la Princesse de Lamballe, who was the most dejected and frightened of the party; she took it. The King walked erect . . . the Queen was in tears; from time to time she wiped them away and strove to take a confident air, which she kept for a little while, but I felt her tremble. The Dauphin was not much frightened. Madame Elizabeth was calm and resigned, religion inspired her. . . . The little Madame wept softly. Madame la Princesse de Lamballe said to me, "We shall never return to the Château."'

It was but a short walk to the Legislative Assembly, but so dense and fierce were the crowds that it was with difficulty a way was made for the mournful little procession, and during this brief time the Queen's pocket was picked of her purse and handkerchief. Nor were they warmly received when the hall was at last reached; some of the deputies opposed their admission, and for half an hour they waited in a little dark, narrow passage while the wrangle was fought out; the howls of the mob so close that Madame Royale said long afterwards, she had never felt death more near than at that moment. At length they were permitted to enter: the King in a loud voice announced that he had come to seek protection for himself and his family, and to prevent the French

people from committing a fearful crime: and they were provided with seats close to Vergniaud, the President for the day. Almost immediately, a fresh squabble was started, as to whether the King might legally be present at the counsels of the Assembly, and this difficulty was only surmounted by the whole party being removed to the Loge de Logographe, a reporter's gallery or box, just behind the President's chair. This box was built to hold seven or eight people round a table; it was low, small, and insufferably hot, the only air being obtained through a barred grille from the already heated atmosphere of the Assembly Hall; but the family were only too thankful to find seats and comparative refuge from clamour for a time. The Queen's thin slippers were worn through to holes, and all the ladies were trembling and exhausted.

The people were still so infuriated against the royal family that it was feared an attack might be made on the Loge, in which case it was necessary that the iron bars of the grille should be removed, to enable the fugitives to precipitate themselves into the midst of the Assembly as their last refuge. No workmen were forthcoming, so four of the Ministers and the King himself took off their coats, and wrenched the bars out with their own hands: not the first time the King had performed a like service for his wife. It was hot work to-day, however, and when he sat down again he asked for a handkerchief to wipe his

forehead. Not one could be found for him without a stain of blood upon it.

The attack on the Tuileries had begun already: cannon roared just outside; bullets rattled on the roof, and even crashed through the windows; not a word could be heard through the deafening tumult. Several members rose and changed their seats, fearful of being struck, till called to order by the President: the King then said he had forbidden the Swiss to fire, and sent another message commanding them not to do so. A deadly silence followed; the gallant Swiss had obeyed to the death, and were simply being mowed down without resistance. A few of them, bleeding and dishevelled, were dragged into the Assembly, and at first it seemed as if they would be slain before the very eyes of the sovereigns who had deserted them; but La Croix protected them, demanded that they should be tried by court-martial, and they were bidden to take seats. In a short time people rushed into the hall, dragging the booty they had looted from the Palace; pictures, mirrors, dresses, books, jewellery, statues: some even flung upon the floor fragments of the Host which they had stolen from neighbouring churches. It was no wonder that the Queen hid her face, and the Princesse de Lamballe sank fainting to the ground. A little fruit and water was brought to the Loge, and the King ate a peach, but the others could take nothing.

Madame de Lamballe became so ill that it was

found necessary to remove her for a few hours to the adjacent deserted Convent of the Feuillants, and the Queen implored her not to return, since she could but share unnecessary misery, and would do far better to travel straight to M. de Penthièvre at Anet. They seem to have thought it would have been quite easy for her to do this, but it is very improbable if it would have been permitted; she refused, however, to listen to the proposal, though admitting to Madame de Tourzel later that, had she suffered after her swoon in the way that was usual to her, she would have gone, knowing she could be of no use, and only a great anxiety to her friend; but that, strangely enough, she recovered in the most rapid manner possible, and was able to return to the Loge in a little over two hours.

The sitting of the Assembly closed with the deposition of the King, the dismissal of his Ministers, and the withdrawal of the civil list, to all of which Louis listened stolidly, without a spark of interest in his face. It being not yet decided what was to be done with the royal family, a few cells in the Convent were hastily prepared for their use, and late in the evening, after fifteen hours in the stifling Loge, they were conveyed thither. The next morning, to their great joy, some of the friends they had left at the Tuileries and feared were dead, came to join them, and these were able to tell what had occurred after their departure. The Queen's ladies had gathered together in her room, the Princesse de

Tarente at their head; and there they waited in momentary expectation of death, while the palace was attacked and overwhelmed. When at last the mob broke in upon them, poor Madame de Ginestous, excitable as ever, suddenly lost her head, and flinging herself upon her knees, shrieked for mercy; while the other ladies, indignant at her weakness, tried to calm her; and the Princesse de Tarente, with entire composure, turned to the young Marseillais who led the rioters, and remarked: 'This poor lady is, as you see, hysterical: will you kindly see her to a place of safety? And this young girl also,' indicating Pauline de Tourzel, 'I confide to your honour; kill me if you will, but treat her with respect.'

Surprised at such calmness, the Marseillais muttered only: 'We do not fight with women; go, all of you, if you choose'; and they were passed safely out. Madame de Ginestous went straight to Madame de Spinola, the Genovese Ambassadress, and remained with her for some time; the Princesse de Tarente went home, but was re-arrested later on; Madame Campan rejoined the Queen, and with her came Pauline, the sixteen-year-old daughter of Madame de Tourzel, to leave whom had been the bitterest of the royal Governess's duties. Clery, the King's valet, came too; and Mdlle. Mertins, the devoted first *femme de chambre* of the Princesse de Lamballe, bringing with her all the money she could scrape together for the use of her mistress. The Princesse

divided this carefully into three portions, keeping one for herself, and giving the others to the King and Madame Elizabeth, in case the party should be separated. Mertins was of the greatest service, not only to her own mistress, but to the other royal ladies too: the Princesse and Madame Elizabeth shared a mattress, and the faithful woman lay at their feet. The door into the next room was left open, and here the Queen and Dauphin slept. So destitute was the royal family since their flight that they possessed only the clothes they wore: the King slept with a napkin tied round his head for lack of a nightcap; and Marie Antoinette was deeply grateful to the English Ambassadress, who had a little boy about the Dauphin's age, for sending her some change of linen for his use.

For three days these most unhappy people lived in the deserted cells of the Convent, being conveyed every morning by a strong guard to the Loge in the Assembly hall, where they spent the time listening to the stormy debates, and sometimes in writing to their friends; the Duc de Penthièvre received letters from his daughter-in-law dated from here. On Monday the 13th August, however, it was decided it would be wiser to remove them to some place of safe-keeping. The Luxembourg was first thought of, but finally choice fell upon the Temple, that palace Marie Antoinette had always hated even in her happiest hours; and at half-past six carriages came to drive

them through Paris to their destination. The people knew what had been settled, and every street was filled with a fierce and surging mob; two and a half hours were passed fighting a slow way through them. In the Place Vendôme the procession was wilfully halted for a time, that the deposed King might see the statue of his predecessor Louis XIV. tumbled to the ground, and hear the savage comment of Manuel, Procureur of Paris, riding by the side of the carriage: 'See, sire! that is how the people treat their kings!' A speech to which poor forgiving Louis, good man but feeble ruler, replied only, 'May God be willing that their rage be vented only upon senseless objects!' In spite of all the sorrows and humiliations she had borne, Marie Antoinette wore proud and royal looks still; and Pétion rode up to her, angrily commanding her not to look so haughty, at which she dropped her eyes, and never lifted them again during the drive.

At nightfall the Temple was reached at last, brilliantly illuminated in honour of the people's victory; yet never perhaps had the Queen been so glad to pass beneath its doors and escape from the yelling mob without.

CHAPTER XVIII

1792

The palace of the Temple consisted of a great tower and a little tower, in the latter of which only the royal family were to be confined. On every floor were but two small rooms with a passage room between, and one of these floors was apportioned to the Queen, the Dauphin, and Madame de Lamballe. Everything was exceedingly uncomfortable, and most of the attendants had been forbidden to accompany them: the Queen had a few waiting-women still, but Madame Campan had been taken from her, and the faithful Mertins had not been allowed to follow her mistress. The prisoners were strictly forbidden to correspond with any one outside the Temple, but they contrived nevertheless to do it; and the Princesse wrote every day to Mertins, and through her to the Duc de Penthièvre: also to Madame de Ginestous, who was still in Paris, and anxious to share her Princesse's imprisonment if she would permit her to do so. Emotional though she was, the little Genovese had a warm and loyal heart, and would gladly have sacrificed her safety to her duty; but the Princesse

assured her it would be of no use, and bade her remain in hiding. She wrote too to the Princesse de Tarente, and a letter that lady received from her was discovered and made the cause of a strict examination of both. It ran: 'I have read to the bravest of friends your letter, my dear little one, and she bids me assure you of her friendship. We think of you. Send me, I beg you, a chemise; for two days I have not undressed. I embrace you with all my heart.' Both declared this to have been written from the Loge, but the Assembly pronounced it absurd, for the Princesse could not possibly have required a chemise in the Loge; yet since the Queen was very glad to receive linen for herself and her son at that time, it does not seem so very improbable that the Princesse should have done so too.

They had hardly settled into the Temple four days before municipal officers visited them, and hinted that the party was too crowded, and some of them had best be moved. On the evening of the 19th, after the ladies had retired to bed, the officers came again, and bade all those who were not actually of the royal family rise, dress, and be carried to the Commune for interrogation. These were Hue and Chamilly, the King's attendants; Mesdames Thibaut, Navarre, and St. Brice, the Queen's women; Madame de Tourzel and her daughter, and the Princesse de Lamballe. The Queen came into her friend's room and protested violently against her removal, declar-

ing her to be a member of the family, as was in a certain sense true; but the officers refused to listen, though at the same time assuring the Queen that all her friends should return safely on the morrow, after their interrogation. None of them could very well believe this, and 'it was with difficulty,' wrote Madame Royale in her *Mémoires* afterwards, 'that my mother could tear herself from the arms of the Princesse de Lamballe.' She took Madame de Tourzel aside, and whispered to her in an agitated voice: 'If we are not happy enough to see you again, take great care of Madame la Princesse de Lamballe; in all awkward positions speak for her, and avoid as much as possible that she should have to answer captious and embarrassing questions.'

The Princesse herself said little. She seems to have known very well that now at last she was to pay the price she had reckoned with for her friendship, and that she would never see Marie Antoinette again. She fell upon her knees, and kissed the Queen's hands with passionate tears, nor would she rise till the guards dragged her roughly to her feet, and tore her away, declaring that such conduct might be suitable perhaps between slaves and tyrants, but should not be seen in a free nation and an equal people. The King, roused by the noise, came and stared at what was going on, but made no comment; poor, inarticulate Louis having said all of moment that he was destined to say until the coming of his

own hour. Madame Elizabeth and the children bade sad farewells; and so, save for one brief and terrible glimpse, the Princesse de Lamballe passed out of the life of the royal family she had loved so well.

What followed has been told in the fullest detail by Madame de Tourzel, who was with the Princesse almost to the end. The prisoners were hurried through long and gloomy passages by the light of torches, till they reached the door, where three *fiacres* awaited them. The Princesse, Madame de Tourzel, and Pauline entered the first, the Queen's three women the second, and Hue and Chamilly the third; and so they were driven to the Hôtel de Ville, where they alighted at a 'horrid little criminal's door'; and each of them was seized between two soldiers and marched to the great salon, where they were separately interrogated before Billaud Varennes. The place was crowded to suffocation with the lowest class of people, delays were endless, and when the interrogation at last took place, the only charge that could be brought against any of them was that of 'secret correspondence.' Madame de Lamballe, as the most important of the prisoners, was examined last, and three o'clock in the morning had struck before her name was called. Her interrogation was very short and puerile, and ran as follows:—

'What are your names?'

'Marie-Thérèse-Louise de Savoie-Carignan.'

'What secret information had you on the day of the 10th August?'

'None.'

'Where did you pass the day?'

'As a relation, I followed the King to the National Assembly.'

'Did you sleep during the night before?'

'No.'

'Where were you then?'

'In my apartment in the Château.'

'Did you not see the King during the night?'

'Hearing a noise, I went to his room about one in the morning.'

'You must have known the people had risen?'

'I learnt it from hearing the tocsin.'

'Did you see the Swiss and National Guards who spent the night on the terrace?'

'I went to my window, but saw no one.'

'Was the King in his room when you went there?'

'Many people were there, but not the King.'

'Did you know that the Mayor of Paris was in the Tuileries?'

'I heard that he had come.'

'At what time did the King go to the National Assembly?'

'About seven o'clock.'

'Did he not first review the troops?'

'Yes.'

'Do you know the oath that was tendered to them?'

'I did not hear there was any oath.'

'Did you know there were guns, pointed and loaded, in the rooms?'

'No.'

'Did you see M. Mandat and M. d'Affray in the Château?'

'No.'

'Do you know the secret doors of the Tuileries?'

'I do not know them.'

'Have you not, while at the Temple, written and received letters which you have tried to pass in a furtive manner?'

'I have never received or written any but those which passed through the hands of the municipal officers.'

'Do you know anything of a piece of furniture made for Madame Elizabeth?'

'No.'

'Have you not, from time to time, received devotional books?'

'No.'

'What books have you at the Temple?'

'I have none.'

'Do you know of a locked staircase?'

'No.'

'What general officers did you see at the Tuileries on the night of the 9th-10th?'

'I saw no general officers: I only saw M. Roederer.'

When this was finished, the Princesse was permitted to join the other prisoners in the cabinet of Tallien, where they remained, between hope and fear, till about midday. A secretary, passing through the room, moved by their state, promised to see if he could obtain permission for them to return to the Temple; but after being absent for a long time, he came back, merely shook his head sadly, and went away. Taking Madame de Tourzel's hand, the Princesse said, 'I hope at least that we shall not be separated.' It was at this time she told her friend how she would have obeyed the Queen, and gone to her father-in-law from the Loge, and thence to England, if she had not recovered so quickly from her swoon. The old Duc meanwhile sent couriers every hour for news of her, and had already offered half his fortune for her safety.

About noon this day, Sunday, a decision was at last arrived at concerning the prisoners; and Hue was permitted to return to his master, though only for a very brief period; while all the rest were informed they would be taken to the prison of La Force. Procureur Manuel it was who, for some sinister reason of his own, had decided upon this prison, while others had been more in favour of the Abbaye. Some one doubted if there were room at La Force, to which Manuel exclaimed, 'Is there not always room for ladies among so gallant a nation as the French?' and the cheap witticism won applause from a capricious and volatile public; so to La Force the ladies went. This building, long since pulled down, was originally erected on part of the old Hôtel de Brienne, and consisted of two parts: the Grande Force, a prison for men, and the Petite Force, a house of correction for women of the vilest class. It was to this last that these gently nurtured ladies were driven through crowded and riotous streets in the blazing noon of an August day, while insults were screamed at them on every side; but thirteen hours had passed since they had had food or sleep, and they were almost too exhausted to care for any of these things. Nevertheless, Madame de Tourzel, who had been no particular intimate of the Princesse before, insists upon her truly marvellous courage and composure now. At last the entrance to the prison was reached, in the Rue des Ballets, and here the tired

women must sit in the council-chamber while their names were entered in the prison register. That register, says M. de Beauchesne, is still kept in the archives of the Prefecture of Police, and a curious detail is to be noted in it. The name of '*Marie-Thérèse-Louise de Savoye-Carignan de Bourbon-Lamballe*' is underlined, as though already some special intention were arrived at with regard to her fate.

François, the young jailer to whose charge they were given, was obliged to fulfil his orders and confine all in separate rooms, but showed otherwise that his sympathies were entirely with them. He was particularly sorry for Pauline on account of her youth, and lent her a little spaniel for company during the night. Madame de Tourzel, however, would not be comforted. Her own dungeon proved damp and horrible, and a few hours in it brought on a violent attack of rheumatism and a bad cold; nevertheless, it contained a second bed, and she never ceased her prayers that Pauline might be restored to her. François himself could do nothing, but brought Manuel; a curious creature, savage Republican by principle, but swayed in a moment by beauty or pleading looks, and open also to bribes. The entreaties of the unhappy mother moved him to fetch her daughter; and when he saw their joy at being together again, he hurried away and brought Madame de Lamballe too.

The happiness of these three ladies at meeting once

more was intense: the Princesse had never passed a night alone before, and her delicate constitution, and the constant nervous attacks to which she was subject, gave her a real dread of the lonely hours. Seeing the extra bed in Madame de Tourzel's cell, she begged to be allowed to occupy it; or Pauline offered, as an alternative, if she were permitted, to return with the Princesse and keep her company in her own cell; but Manuel interposed, promising they should all be moved together to Madame de Lamballe's room early the next morning, that being much the best and largest of the three. This promise was kept; and the prisoners were also permitted to write to the Temple for such of their effects as had been left behind.

The officials who carried their requests were surprised at the quickness and neatness with which the King and Queen packed up all they could think of that might be useful to their friends: Princesse Elizabeth sent a dress of her own for Pauline, and the Queen enclosed a roll of English flannel for warmth and covering. The box arrived safely at La Force, and its contents proved very welcome. All day, and for many days after, the three women talked and hoped together. 'We tried,' writes Madame de Tourzel, 'to make our situation less painful during this period by portioning out our time in different occupations, such as the care of our room, needlework, and reading. Our thoughts always turned towards the Temple, and we indulged ourselves sometimes in

the hope that the foreign party would master our persecutors, would take the King for mediator, and that we should emerge safe and sound from prison to find ourselves with the royal family once more. Madame la Princesse de Lamballe was perfect in this sad situation, so sweet, good, and obliging; she did us all the little services in her power. Pauline and I were constantly occupied with her, and we had at least the consolation in our sorrow to have but one heart and soul between us. This good Princesse begged me to speak frankly with her, and on my saying to her that after such noble conduct as hers she ought not to permit herself little childishnesses, which did her wrong, and should on the contrary now commence a new life, she replied gently that she had already formed that resolution, as well as to adhere more faithfully to her religious principles, which she had of late a little neglected. She took Pauline into her friendship, and said daily the kindest things concerning the pleasure she felt in having us near her. It was impossible not to feel for her a veritable attachment. . . . The poor Princesse de Lamballe supported this cruel life with admirable patience and sweetness, and by a strange chance her health became fortified during the sad time. She had no more nervous attacks, and said she had not felt so well for long.' At this same moment Madame de Buffon, the Duc d'Orléans' mistress for the time, was writing carelessly to Lauzun at Coblentz: 'The *ci-devant*

Princesse de Lamballe is without a maid and has to look after herself. For a person who affects to feel ill before a lobster in a picture this must be a rude position. I went yesterday to the Opera,' etc.

The prisoners asked often for news of the Queen, but were told nothing; till at last they worked upon Manuel himself to give them tidings. 'I do not like kings, and will not speak of them,' he said at first; but when they exclaimed, 'Ah, but we love ours; for we are his servants and have lived with his family, and it is only natural we should be most anxious to hear about him,' he admitted they had reason for their desire, and told them the royal family were still at the Temple and in perfectly good health. He even gave Madame de Lamballe a letter from the Duc de Penthièvre, authorised all three to write letters and receive answers, and gave them permission to walk in the prison courtyard every evening for an hour. This last relaxation they prized greatly, and the change and air, such as it was, proved of immense value. The Princesse, who had never before been able to bear Paris later than July, was thankful now for an hour between four walls under the open sky on an August evening. As they were walking here one day, a carriage drove up with a fresh prisoner, Madame de Septeuil, the wife of the King's first valet. They ran forward to ask for news, but were disgusted to find the lady quite indifferent to the Queen's fate, or that of anybody but herself; and merely delighted to

see them because she hoped to share their room, and pass her imprisonment in such distinguished company. The Princesse took François aside and begged him not to permit this, and they were consequently left undisturbed.

The days did not, however, pass without incident, and the prisoners were obliged to be constantly upon their guard. La Force was full of the vilest people; bad songs and language rang in the ears day and night, and it was difficult to obtain a moment's repose. One morning a strange man entered, announcing himself as a friend who had been sent by the Princesse de Tarente, now a prisoner at the Abbaye. He asked them many questions, to which they returned prudent and evasive answers, distrusting his looks, and he then went away and never returned. Another time Colonges, a jailer from another part of the prison, brought them a pile of coarse linen, with the remark, 'It is the custom, ladies, for prisoners to work, so I bring you some shirts to make for our brothers-in-arms; you are of course too good patriots not to work at them with pleasure.' 'Anything useful to our compatriots will never be rejected by us,' said the Princesse mildly; and the ladies did indeed work at the hard stuff, and were perhaps not altogether sorry for the occupation, till Manuel came in and saw them at it, and angrily bade the whole be taken away. There is a rumour that the beauty and gentleness of Madame de Lamballe had so worked upon his imagination,

that, fortified by the bribes of her father-in-law, he had determined, when the moment came, to save her if he could, spite of that ominous line beneath her name in the register. François, too, fast grew devoted to his noble charges, and often promised to help them escape if the Parisians should rise.

That fear lest Paris might rise became, in fact, a very imminent one during these last sinister days of August. There were too many masters in the city; no one knew whose authority was to be obeyed, and the autocrat of to-day might be the hunted fugitive of to-morrow. The prisons were crammed thick with aristocrats and clergy, helpless victims at the mercy of the people; and the jailers in charge had no means of standing siege should the many-headed choose to sweep them aside and hack down what they guarded. Fresh defeats in the field drove the people of Paris mad; they must avenge themselves upon the prey nearest, and fears became a certainty in the first week of September. The prisoners were, perhaps wisely, kept ignorant of what was dreaded, since their position was frightful enough as it stood; but beyond their walls dreadful rumours were spread. The Duc de Penthièvre redoubled his efforts to save his beloved child; agents of his had followed her to the Hôtel de Ville, and were now hanging about outside La Force; every one who could be bribed had money; no stone was left unturned. It is extraordinary that in the venal state of France at that

time all this did not yet serve to rescue her; but very plainly some strong party insisted upon her death.

On the morning of Sunday, the 2nd September, François hurriedly entered the apartment of the three ladies to tell them their usual recreation would not be possible that evening; the town was excited and upset concerning the foreign enemies, and no prisoners must leave their rooms. Having said this he went away, and did not return all day. The women were slightly alarmed, but all remained so quiet inside the prison that they did not attach much importance to the incident; and having prayed and kissed one another, went to bed as usual. Scarcely asleep, they were again aroused by a strange man, who glided mysteriously into the room and gave the peremptory order, 'Mademoiselle de Tourzel, dress yourself at once and follow me.'

The terrified Marquise found voice to exclaim, 'What are you going to do with my daughter?' to which she received reply, 'Nothing to do with you, Madame; let her dress and come.' 'You must obey, Pauline, and may heaven protect you!' sobbed the poor lady; but she was too unnerved for more, and it was the Princesse de Lamballe who rose from bed, and helped the frightened girl to dress with reassuring words. The man stood in a corner of the room all the while, exclaiming, 'Hurry! Hurry!' and when poor Pauline at the last ran to her mother

for a final embrace, he seized her arm and hurried her impatiently away. The door clanged after her, and 'when I recovered from my first stupefaction,' writes the Marquise, 'I rose and threw myself on my knees, imploring the goodness of God for my dear Pauline, and asking Him for courage and resignation for her and me. I rose with a little more strength. I then thanked Madame de Lamballe for all her goodness to me and my daughter. It would be impossible to be more perfect than she was to us during this sad night, or to show more sense and courage. She took possession of Pauline's pockets, burned all papers and letters she found, that nothing might compromise her, and was watching constantly to listen if she could hear anything that might give us some knowledge of her fate. Then she came back to the bed, reproaching me with a perfect kindness for letting weakness replace the courage she had always known, to which I could but reply, "Ah, dear Princesse, but you are not a mother!" I begged her to take a little repose, and she did so, sleeping for some hours a most tranquil sleep. I threw myself on the bed, entirely dressed, and in the most violent state. Pauline occupied all my thoughts. I could not read or do anything but repeat, "My God! Have pity on my dear Pauline, and give us grace to resign ourselves to Thy holy will!"'

Unknown to the prisoners, since the preceding afternoon, what was later called 'The Hundred

Hours' had begun to rage in Paris, a period incredible in blood and horror, when the men—and women—of France turned wolves and tigers, falling upon defenceless prisoners to hack and slay and mutilate. The September massacres started among the priests at the Abbaye, and next the mob stormed on to La Force, demanding that its captives should be brought one by one before the horrible mock tribunal there set up. When Pauline was taken from her mother's room, her mysterious guide hurried her downstairs, listening carefully as they went for any sound. At one time he fancied he heard voices, and seeming alarmed, he made the young girl go back a few steps, pushed her in at a door, and locked it after her. She found herself in a small cell, with a candle just guttering out upon the floor; a moment later it was extinguished, and she remained alone in darkness and terror for about half an hour. At last she heard rather than saw the door open softly, a voice called her name very low, and another man entered with a small lantern. He bade her come quietly downstairs, showed her into another room, gave her a bundle, telling her to put on what it contained, and then left her. By this time she had recognised him as one who had spoken to her and shown some interest in her fate at the time of her interrogation; she had then thought it a mere impertinence, but was soon to find him the best of friends, both to her mother and herself. This man's

name was Jean Hardi, and he was a member of the Commune. Pauline was so frightened and bewildered, still not knowing whether her new guide were a friend or not, that she remained stupefied for some minutes, till Hardi looked in again to see if she were ready. 'What! not yet dressed!' he exclaimed. 'Your life is in great danger if you do not come quickly.' She then opened the bundle, which contained the dress of a peasant, fortunately of such large size that she was able to slip it over her own clothes; and so soon as she had done so her would-be deliverer took her arm and led her out of the prison by a door opening on the Rue de Sicile. It was now about midnight, and a brilliant moon shone in the sky, making everything as clear as day. An immense crowd stood outside the prison, and immediately the two were seen to emerge, hoarse cries were raised of 'Here is a prisoner being saved!' and they were at once surrounded by threatening ruffians. M. Hardi shouted that this was not a prisoner; that circumstances had taken her to La Force, and he was charged to see her safely removed; that he was a member of the Commune (of which he showed the badge), and therefore to be trusted; that Frenchmen would never permit the innocent to suffer with the guilty, and more to the same effect; until, although some still cried out that they recognised her as Mademoiselle de Tourzel, and had often seen her with the Dauphin, Hardi was at last suffered to take her away.

They went on foot through several streets, but so many times did Pauline appear to be recognised, that her guide left her in a dark little court for half an hour, and went away to reconnoitre. He came back with a fresh disguise, that of a man, into which he bade her change, but this she flatly refused, giving as an excuse that he had brought no hat or shoes for it; and he then said he wished to take her to his own house, but in order to reach it they must either go back by the prison, or else through the church of the Petit St. Antoine, which was filled with the infuriated mob; both courses being equally dangerous. Pauline chose the church, and by his instructions, crept into it on her hands and knees, and managed to conceal herself behind a broken altar in a dark little chapel: here she remained for some time, praying and resting, till, at about nine o'clock in the morning, Hardi fetched her safely to his own home. Her adventures, however, were not yet over. She was seen to enter the house, which was immediately watched, and in terror lest it should be searched and she still taken, a few hours later her host brought her a large hat and veil, and gave her careful instructions what she was to do. 'Go out alone,' he said: 'turn to the right, then take the first turning to the left, which will lead you to a little place where three roads meet; take the centre one and follow it till you reach a fountain: near this you will find a passage leading to a wide road, and

in the road a fiacre will be waiting close to an alley. You must hide in this alley till I come; but whatever happens, do not forget these directions.' She promised to remember, but once in the street, was so bewildered that she turned to the left first. Happening, however, to glance up at the window, she saw her guide frantically signalling in the opposite direction, and once started right, she remembered the whole, and reached the alley safely. Here she had to wait for a very long time, till Hardi and another man, whom she recognised as Billaud Varennes, who had presided at her interrogation, joined her; and together they all got into the fiacre, telling her they were going to the house of Danton. Arrived here, they left her in the fiacre, and went in themselves; and in a very few minutes emerged again and greeted her with the words, 'You are saved!' They then asked her where she would like to go, and she suggested the house of Madame de Lède, an aged relative of hers, where finally, after some discussion, she was safely taken; but before taking a grateful leave of Hardi, she burst into tears, and implored him to do what he could to save her mother. He appeared somewhat embarrassed, but promised to do his best, though pointing out that it was now three in the afternoon, and for some hours he had not been able to attend to any but Pauline's affairs.

Meanwhile, after the terrible night spent by the

ladies in La Force, they were roused at six o'clock in the morning by François, who looked in to warn them that their room was to be visited; and almost immediately six men, grimly armed, came in, stared very hard at them, asked their names, and went away again. The last ominously raised his eyes and hands to heaven as he went, but fortunately the Princesse did not perceive this, and Madame de Tourzel, who was very much alarmed, did not tell her. So soon as they were gone, however, she said: 'This day opens, dear Princesse, in a very stormy manner. We do not know what heaven has in store for us; let us therefore reconcile ourselves to God, and ask pardon for our faults, say a Miserere and a Confiteor, make an act of contrition, and recommend ourselves to His goodness.' This they did together. By now the fierce howls of the mob, surging outside the prison, penetrated even to that remote chamber; and Madame de Lamballe, pushing her bed under the window, was able to climb up to the window-sill and see something of the horrible crowd below. Almost immediately, however, she was recognised, and stones aimed at her: one struck her on the cheek, and she was obliged to retire. Already, though she did not know or hear it, a vile pamphlet was being cried and sold in the streets under the title of 'The Last Testament of the *ci-devant* Princesse de Lamballe,' filled with mock confessions and accusations against Marie Antoinette of the most

horrible nature; another proof how fully determined it was that the unhappy lady was to die that day.

Opening the inner windows on to the prison courtyard, the two women were struck with the curious contrast of intense quiet. They intended to ask François the meaning of all this when he brought their breakfast, but he never came; so they took out their needlework, and sat tranquilly down to it. About eleven, more armed men entered, and demanded that Madame de Lamballe should follow them. Madame de Tourzel refused to leave her, and permission being accorded, the two went out together into the passage. They were told to sit down on the stairs until the other women in the prison were assembled; and having had nothing to eat since the preceding night, asked for food, and were given some bread and wine. Little inclined for it, they nevertheless ate and drank, foreseeing the calls to be made upon their strength and endurance; and shortly after they were ordered to descend into the court. The place was crowded with brutal and drunken men, the air thick with foul words: when the Princesse was seen, she was greeted with the vilest and most insulting vociferations. For the first time since her imprisonment she became giddy and almost fainted, but forcing herself to keep up, commanded respect even from that crowd by her quiet dignity, and withdrew to a corner of the courtyard

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with Madame de Tourzel. The Queen's women were also here.

The noise and turmoil were horrible, and the ladies were obliged to wait in this situation for some time. It was during this period that François Gabriel, a young artist, much struck by the beautiful head of the ill-fated Princesse, made, without her knowledge, a hasty sketch of her with a bit of lead-pencil and a few crumbs of bread he found in his pocket. Later, he improved the tiny portrait at home, and a print of it was lately presented to the Louvre by M. Clémenceau.

The men in the courtyard entered freely into conversation with their prisoners, questioned them about their life and friends, and loudly criticised their conduct. They were very angry with Madame de Tourzel for wearing a ring on which was inscribed her oath of faithfulness to her royal charges, and wished her to throw it away; but she would only consent to put it in her pocket. This seems, however, ultimately to have won their respect. Madame de Lamballe was also questioned by these creatures; and Madame de Tourzel writes: 'I never quitted the poor Princesse de Lamballe for an instant all the time she was in the court; and we were seated side by side when they came to fetch her to be conducted to that ghastly tribunal. We pressed hands for the last time, and I can certify that she showed great courage and presence of mind, replying without

trouble to all questions asked her by those monsters, who mingled among us in order to contemplate their victims before condemning them to death: and I know positively since that she showed the same courage in the interrogation which preceded her sad end.'

After the Princesse had been removed, Madame de Tourzel still remained for some time in the courtyard, and this delay probably saved her life. She noticed one man, taller and better-looking than the rest, regarding her fixedly without speaking; presently he passed close by her, and said in a low voice as he did so, 'Your daughter is saved.' The poor mother's thankfulness at these words may be imagined, and her own trial now seemed to her of little consequence; but she had in fact unknown friends who were determined to deliver her from her terrible predicament. When, some hours later, she was in her turn brought before the tribunal, Jean Hardi and eight stout comrades were at hand to crowd around her, shout down the charges of her accusers, and bear her off in triumph to a fiacre they had in waiting. That same afternoon she was happily reunited to her beloved Pauline at the house of Madame de Lède.

CHAPTER XIX

SEPTEMBER 3, 1792

MANY French writers, followed by Carlyle, have given a rather different version of the calling of Madame de Lamballe before the Revolutionary tribunal. She was lying down alone in her room, they say, when a man entered, and commanded her to rise, saying she was to be taken to the Abbaye. She replied that she was well enough where she was, and did not wish to go to the Abbaye; and on the command being repeated, tried to gain time by pleading that she must arrange her dress first. This request was not granted, and she was immediately dragged, half fainting, before her judges. Perhaps the version arose out of another story, that M. de Penthièvre had warned her not to leave her cell upon any pretext, since a plot was on foot to open every door and cry out '*Libre! Libre!*' and then to massacre all the prisoners as they emerged; but there is no real proof of any such intention. So great a vagueness hangs about all the last hours of the Princesse that it is certainly wiser to accept Madame de

Tourzel's story so long as the two ladies remained together.

It will be remembered that all women were confined in the Petite Force, but the improvised tribunal was held in the room of the concierge in the Grande Force; and the Princesse, immediately upon leaving her friend, was taken across there. The tribunal consisted of six or seven judges, mostly emissaries of the Commune, a public accuser, and a President, frequently changed, but who at this moment happened to be the notorious Hébert. The proceedings were in all cases summary. A few hasty questions were asked of each prisoner, whose sentence had almost always been decided beforehand; if the President pronounced the words 'Conduct him to the Abbaye,' or 'Let him go,' it meant death; if, on the contrary, the verdict was '*Vive la nation*,' he was embraced, and permitted to depart. Contrary to the usual belief, a great many prisoners were acquitted, chiefly women, of whom, it is said, over two hundred were saved and only two killed in these September massacres; the church of SS. Paul and Louis, opposite La Force, and the Petit St. Antoine alongside, were known as '*les dépôts des innocents*,' for here the acquitted were permitted to take refuge. A terrible refuge it must have been, with the shrieks of the murdered and the fearful wild-beast cries of the murderers ringing without; the wonder is that any lived through to tell the tale. For those un-

fortunates who were doomed to death a more horrible scene still was set. They were brought out from the concierge's room into the yard fronting the Rue des Ballets, which literally swam with blood; crowds of men, women, and even children of the people, hardly human, rushing forward to strike, hack, tear with any kind of weapon at the helpless victim till he fell, pierced and torn, upon a heap of naked and mutilated corpses by the gate.

The concierges of the prison were in no way to blame for any of these happenings. They were helpless to prevent them, and horrified that their charge could be so ill carried out. They did indeed manage to save certain persons, but Madame de Lamballe was too important a prisoner thus to be smuggled away. She was called for, and brought through stifling and crowded passages to the place where her judges were set. The room was small, hot to suffocation, crammed with drunken men and women, the air hideous with fearful cries from without. She was half carried in at last, in a fainting condition, and the tribunal must wait some minutes until she was restored sufficiently to continue. Then began the ghastly travesty of justice. The talk was again all of plots and secret correspondence: the words of the trial as handed down to us are scanty and swift, yet some will have it that it lasted during four hours. Much confusion obtains about the whole business, but it is little likely that so long

a time would be spent over one prisoner, whose condemnation was already practically settled ; and, in fact, the following is probably the correct version :—

'Who are you ?'

'Marie Thérèse Louise, Princess of Savoy.'

'Your employment ?'

'Superintendent of the Household to the Queen.'

'Had you any knowledge of the plots of the court on the 10th August ?'

'I know not whether there were any plots on the 10th August ; but I know that I had no knowledge of them.'

'Swear to Liberty and Equality, and hatred of the King and Queen.'

'Readily to the former ; but I cannot to the latter : it is not in my heart.'

Among the crowd a man, disguised as a revolutionist, but in truth a servant of the Duc de Penthièvre, unable single-handed to do more for her, whispered, 'Swear ! If you do not you are a dead woman.' She, not knowing whom to believe, gave no reply, but raised her hands to her head, and made a step towards the door. Then, drawing herself up, added, 'I have nothing more to say ; it is indifferent to me if I die a little earlier or later ; I have made the sacrifice of my life.' The judge, watching her, then said, 'Let Madame be set at liberty.'

The Princesse was not aware of the sinister meaning of these words, but she seems to have gathered little hope from them. As she was led to the door

her friend again whispered frantically, 'Cry "*Vive la nation!*" and you may be saved yet!' but it is doubtful if she even heard him. The supreme effort had been made, and her senses were now mercifully failing her. The door was thrown open, the ghastly sight outside met her eyes, and with a cry of '*Fi horreur!*' or, as others say, 'I am lost!' she fell back into the arms of the two savage ruffians behind her. They seized and pulled her forward: even now a few cries of '*Grâce! Grâce!*' mingled with the hoarse roar of hate, but they were quickly quelled by shouts of 'Death to the disguised lackeys of the Duc de Penthièvre!' It is said two of these were slain, and the rest fled. One of her murderers, brought, long years after, to some tardy justice, described her as 'a little lady dressed in white'—a haunting phrase—standing alone a moment above the carnage: then, as she was dragged into the centre of the courtyard, a man struck at her with his pike, thrusting it through that crowning glory of her beauty, her fair and abundant hair. Down fell the rippling masses of it, and with them a letter in the Queen's writing, which she had concealed there: the ruffian's hand, too, unsteady with drink, wounded her on the forehead, and blood trickled from the cut. At sight of it, like wild beasts mad for slaughter, all rushed and flung themselves upon her; she was thrown upon the heap of corpses by the gate, stabbed through and through, her head cut off, every scrap of clothing torn from her,

exposed, 'naked and beautiful, as God made her,' says a French writer; her heart wrenched out, and mutilations horrible and inhuman inflicted upon her body.

Tales such as these sicken the very soul: it is better not to dwell upon them: yet something must be recorded. Some comfort that after that first awful glimpse at the gate, she can have known nothing: her gentle spirit had fled long before her poor body suffered these unspeakable things. It is possible, too, that the tale of them has been exaggerated, for there was a time some few years after the Revolution when it was the fashion in retrospect to heap horrors upon horror's head, and what might have happened was soon told with circumstance as what did actually happen. Too many witnesses, however, have borne evidence to the truth of the outrages upon Madame de Lamballe to dismiss them without some word. Her head was carried in triumph through Paris on a pike, her heart upon another, her body dragged after: dancing crowds, shrieking 'La Lamballe! La Lamballe!' surrounded it. M. de Lamotte, driving down a street, met the awful crowd, which stopped him, showed the ghastly trophy, and forced him to salute it. One man near carried a handful of the Princesse's hair: and M. de Lamotte gave him two assignats of a hundred sous for it, 'as a memento,' and afterwards had it conveyed to M. de Penthièvre.

On went the crowd, screaming 'La Lamballe! La Lamballe!' 'My brother,' writes Madame Junot, 'coming to pay us a visit, perceived as he came along groups of people, whose sanguinary drunkenness was horrible. . . . Opposite the house of Beaumarchais he was stopped by an immense mob, composed of half-naked people besmeared with blood, who had the appearance of demons. They vociferated, sang, and danced. It was the Saturnalia of hell. On perceiving Albert's cabriolet they cried out, "Let it be taken to him: he is an aristocrat." In a moment the cabriolet was surrounded by the multitude, and from the middle of the crowd an object seemed to arise and approach. My brother's troubled sight did not at first enable him to perceive long auburn tresses clotted with blood and a countenance still lovely. The object came nearer and nearer and rested upon his face. My unhappy brother uttered a piercing cry. He had recognised the head of the Princesse de Lamballe.'

The shop of a famous *perruquier* was passed, one who had often coiffed the Princesse in happier days, and some fiends in the mob shouted that he should dress the head again, and rouge the dead lips and cheeks, for they would carry their prize to Antoinette in her prison, and it was necessary she should recognise her friend. The wretched hairdresser was obliged to obey, and performed his task so well that the beautiful face was almost lifelike as, with wild

songs and *ça iras*, it was swept on towards the Temple. There had been talk of carrying it first to the Abbaye St. Antoine, where long since the Princesse had contemplated taking the veil, and where she had often since gone into retreat with her friend the Abbess, Madame de Beauveau; but not sufficient time seems to have been allowed for this, and all the excitement of the crowd concentrated upon the expedition to the Temple.

That very morning Manuel had visited the King and Queen, and assured them that Madame de Lamballe and all the other prisoners at La Force were well, and securely guarded. At three o'clock in the afternoon, shortly after dinner, they sat down to play backgammon together, an excuse really for a few words unheard by their keepers, when a fearful uproar became audible in the distance, rapidly approaching, till the tumult beneath the windows grew absolutely alarming. The officer on guard, a man of some humanity, closed the doors and windows and drew the curtains, merely remarking that the people were excited, and it was wiser the King should not look out. Almost immediately after, Clery entered, very pale, as indeed he might well be. He had just gone down to his dinner with Tison and his wife, servants in the Temple, when the head upon the pike was presented at the window with shrieks of inhuman laughter. Half an hour sooner the Queen herself would have been there, and the mob hoped,

in fact, that the cry of Madame Tison which they heard, came from her. Clery says that the head, though bleeding, was not disfigured, and the fair hair, still in curls, hung about the pike. It had been with the greatest difficulty that the people had been prevented from dragging the torn and mutilated corpse also under the Queen's windows, and only a tricolour ribbon drawn around the courtyard served to restrain them: the head, however, the guards were obliged to admit. Marie Antoinette, surprised at seeing Clery again so soon, asked why he was not at dinner, to which he replied that he felt ill and could not eat. The noise without grew greater and greater, and presently several officers of the guard and the municipality arrived, and on further inquiries replied bluntly: 'Well, since you will know, it is Lamballe's head, which the people wish to show you, that you may see how tyrants are served; and if you do not go to the window, they will bring it up to you.'

The Queen sank fainting to the ground, but Louis forced himself to approach the window for a moment, looked a last time upon the features of the *très chère et aimée cousine*, and immediately retired. For two hours the tumult continued, and then the mob drifted away towards the Palais Royal, and comparative silence reigned: but that was a terrible night at the Tuileries. Marie Antoinette, indomitable till now, fell crushed beneath this blow. 'My aunt and I heard drums beating to arms all night,' wrote Madame

Royale afterwards, 'but my unhappy mother did not even attempt to sleep. She sobbed and sighed all night.'

From the Tuileries the dreadful merrymakers hastened to the Palais Royal, where the Duc d'Orléans and his mistress, Madame de Buffon, entertained a party of Englishmen, and were just about to sit down to supper. 'It is doubtful,' says Bertrand de Moleville, 'whether this visit was intended as an insult or an act of homage,' but Orléans seems to have taken it very coolly. Agnes de Buffon threw herself into a chair, shrieking, 'O God! They will carry my head like that some day!' But he merely remarked, 'Oh, it is Lamballe's head: I know it by the long hair. Let us sit down to supper,' and proceeded to help his guests. One of his apologists, on the contrary, declares that he nearly fainted at the sight, and exclaimed, 'Unhappy woman! Had she trusted me she would not have been there!' but this does not appear to have been the general view of his conduct. Dr. Moore, himself in Paris during all these days, having spoken of the Queen's passionate grief, adds: 'Although the Princesse de Lamballe was a near connection of the proprietor of this palace (the Palais Royal), I do not understand that the shock which the sight occasioned endangers his health.' It is due, however, to Orléans to point out that the generally received story of his having instigated the Princesse's death in order to enjoy her wealth is quite unfounded,

since, being now separated from his wife, the death of any relation of hers could make no pecuniary difference to him. There is no doubt that he might have done much to save his sister-in-law, and that his latter conduct towards her was animated by an almost inhuman spitefulness, but this had its root in far more subtle considerations than mere money.

The agents of the Duc de Penthièvre, meanwhile, unable though they had been to save the Princesse, still hoped to carry out some part of their mission. 'If harm comes to my daughter-in-law,' the Duc had written, 'follow the body wherever they carry it, and have it buried in the nearest cemetery till I can have it transported to Dreux.' Three of these men, therefore, disguised and seeming to fraternise with the ruffians who held the pikes, followed the grim procession wherever it went: turned those who would have carried the bleeding head to the Hôtel de Toulouse from their purpose by declaring that the Princesse had never lived there of late, only at the Tuileries or her own Hôtel Louvois (which, as a matter of fact, she had only used for her stables), and as the afternoon wore on, watched every chance of effecting their purpose. At length Charlat, he who held the pike, grew thirsty, and leaving it at the door in the charge of Jacques Pointel, one of Penthièvre's men, entered an alehouse with the other two, who plied him with drink till he became intoxicated. Pointel immediately lifted down the head, wrapped it quickly in a napkin,

and hurried to the little peaceful Cemetery of the Foundlings close by, near the Hospital of the Quinze-Vingts, where he offered 600 livres from the Duc de Penthièvre if it might be interred. All Paris was not so brutal as the assassins of the prisons, and the Princesse had long been a kind and charitable visitor to the Foundling Hospital: the following day, therefore, the authorities consented to allow this to be done.

As to what at last became of her body nothing is known. Five men, Hervelin, Quervelle, Pouquet, Ferrie, and Roussel, had presented themselves at the Foundlings about an hour before Pointel, bringing with them a little pile of treasures found in the dress or apartment of the murdered lady, which they wished to have verified before carrying them back themselves to the National Assembly. The list of these articles is rather pathetic. There was a little copy of the *Imitation of Christ*, bound in red morocco, with gilt edges; a red morocco portfolio; a case containing eighteen national assignats for five livres each; the ring with Marie Antoinette's hair in it; a little ivory pocket-book with a gold pen and two gold clasps; a mother-of-pearl penknife with two blades, ornamented with silver; a corkscrew and a little depilator of English steel; a little card with a vignette on it and some indistinguishable words; a paper containing a memorandum of linen and clothes; two little glass bottles for ink, with gold tops,

and some coloured sand to seal with; a medallion in blue cloth, trimmed with blue silk, a pierced and flaming heart painted upon it (the Freemason badge); and a picture with, on the one side, a flaming heart pierced with a sword and crowned with thorns, over the words, 'Cor Jesus salva nos, perimur'; and on the reverse, a heart and fleur-de-lis, with the inscription, 'Cor Mariae unitum cordi Christi.' These poor little treasures having been certified at the Quinze-Vingts, were taken back to the National Assembly, and all arrived safely except the assignats, which unaccountably disappeared by the way. It is said that these same five 'patriots' also brought with them to the Quinze-Vingts the headless corpse of the Princesse, for which they demanded burial, and were refused, it being declared to be 'the body of a traitor'; but this seems in the highest degree improbable. Weber says that on being forbidden to drag the body into the Temple, the crowd threw it aside upon a heap of nameless corpses, with which it was afterwards flung into a quicklime pit: other authorities tell of its being torn to fragments, the heart roasted and eaten, one of the legs used to load a cannon, and other nameless horrors, of which one can but hope the half to be fabrications: but it seems very unlikely that any members of the mob would have troubled themselves to procure seemly burial for it. The head was, however, undoubtedly laid in the quiet little cemetery garden, now long since destroyed, where

the gentle Princesse had often sat and talked to the children, whom she delighted to watch at their play, and whose after-welfare she had so frequently and so substantially aided. It was never, as originally intended, removed to Dreux, where indeed the other tombs were all two years later broken open, and the long-guarded bones of the Penthièvres thrown out into the dust of the highway. A faithful friend marked the spot with a stone, and the Duchesse d'Orléans was able long afterwards to erect a beautiful monument to their memory.

CHAPTER XX

CONCLUSION

THAT same night rumours of the dreadful news reached Fortaire, M. de Penthièvre's valet, at Vernon; but he said nothing to his master. It might not be true: for two days the massacres at the prisons had continued, and yet the Princesse was safe: the Duc had spared no pains to bribe right and left, high and low, all who might serve her; and it was not really thought possible that she could die. But at seven in the morning the Paris letters came in, and M. de Miromesnil, who now lived with his old friend, was the first to be apprised of the terrible certainty.

He broke it to the Duchesse d'Orléans, taking her her letters himself; and she fainted in horror, only managing to command herself when it was pointed out to her that she and none other must be the one to tell her aged father. To our modern notions, convinced that no ill news can adequately be broken, the scene these kind creatures devised out of the love of their hearts, seems grim in the extreme. The whole household was hastily dressed in black,

and tip-toed into the Duc's room, where they sat in a semi-circle, with pocket-handkerchiefs, round his bed, the Duchesse in an arm-chair beside him; so that when at last his eyes opened, they fell upon an exact representation of a mourning household prepared to receive visits of condolence. Death is not so dreadful to the old, and the Duc understood very quickly. His only remark was the curious one that 'he had nothing to reproach himself with'; he then kissed his daughter, got up, prayed, dressed, and an hour later the whole house assembled in the black-hung chapel to hear Mass for the soul of the murdered Princesse.

Two months later, the community of Vernon planted a 'tree of liberty' on M. de Penthièvre's terrace, informing him that it represented Homage rendered to Virtue, at which he must have smiled somewhat; and in the following March he died, only thus, it is probable, saving himself from the scaffold, which quickly after engulfed most of his friends and relatives. Louis XVI. had already been guillotined on the 21st January, Marie Antoinette followed in October, Madame Elizabeth a year later; the Dauphin died wretchedly in prison. When the Queen's room was searched after her death, a miniature of Madame de Lamballe was found to be one of the few treasures she had managed to conceal to the last.

The Duc d'Orléans, elected a member of the Convention immediately after the massacres of September,

threw aside his own name and took that of *Égalité*, reaching his lowest depth of infamy by voting in the public Assembly for the King's death, being present at his execution, and driving thence in a coach and six with a gay party to Raincy for the afternoon It is said that his friend, the English Prince Regent tore up his portrait in disgust when he heard of this, and would never speak of him again. In spite of truckling to the people, however, Orléans, faithless to his own house, could not win trust from any other. He was always regarded with suspicion; and when, the following year, his son Louis Philippe left France to join the Austrians in Switzerland, the incident was sufficient to focus long floating accusations upon his head, and he too was guillotined in November 1793.

Twelve years later, the power of Napoleon having been crushed, the monarchy of France was restored, and M. de Provence reigned for nine years as Louis XVIII.; after which, he dying without children, his brother the Comte d'Artois succeeded him as Charles X. Both the Savoy princesses had died in exile before their husbands became Kings of France. Charles's eldest son, the Duc d'Angoulême, married, as had long before been arranged, his cousin, that 'Princess of Sorrows,' Madame Royale, but they had no children: and the younger son, the Duc de Berri, left only a posthumous son, whose claims, on the abdication of Charles himself in August 1830, were

quickly set aside; and Louis Philippe d'Orléans, son of the notorious Égalité, was called to the throne.

Some word concerning the subsequent fate of other friends of the Princesse de Lamballe may not here come amiss. The Duchesse d'Orléans, gentle and harmless creature though she had always been, was arrested six months after her father's death, and imprisoned for nearly a year at the Luxembourg: then moved to a *Maison de Santé*, where rather more liberty was allowed her. The good nuns of Montmartre, where she had spent her happy schooldays, came often to visit her; and her chief regret was that her natural generosity could not fulfil itself, since all her wealth had been taken from her, and she was very poor. Through all her adversities, however, she kept safely a ring containing the portrait of her father. In the end of 1797, permitted at last to leave France, she journeyed to Spain, and a few years later her children joined her. She died in June 1821, aged sixty-eight, not living to see her son made King of France.

Étiennette de Lâge, after her hasty visit to Paris in the last days of that fatal July, reached Bordeaux safely on the 4th August, there finding her three tiny daughters overjoyed to see her, and her mother, as she had feared, gravely ill. All through that terrible month and the alarming news it brought, she nursed Madame d'Amblimont; till on the night of the 3rd September, the patient, having nearly died that day,

lay silent at last, soothed with morphia, and Étiennette herself, half dead with fatigue, rested beside her. Shouts rose in the streets; the news of the massacres had come; and Madame de Lâge had lost not only her Princesse, but two uncles, the Bishops of Saintes and Beauvais. She says she flung herself at the window in horror, unable to believe her ears. All that day her mother lay unconscious, and she herself could not speak for grief. In the end Madame d'Amblimont recovered, and lived ten years longer. The whole family escaped to Spain, and remained seven years there before it was safe for them to return to France: and Madame de Lâge herself lived till 1842, dying at the age of seventy-eight, when she had outlived almost every relation she possessed.

Madame de Ginestous kept herself hidden all the while the Princesse de Lamballe was imprisoned at La Force, ready to join her at any moment. After the massacres of September she accompanied her friend Madame de Spinola to Boulogne, but still, struggling bravely with her natural fears, refused to leave France while the Queen lived and might need her: on hearing of the execution of Marie Antoinette, however, she immediately went on board a boat bound for England. She developed a serious fever while on board, went mad, and never after regained her senses.

Florian the poet died in September 1794, a year and a half after his beloved Duc de Penthièvre.

Of the Duchesse de Polignac it is related that when she, at Vienna, heard of the Queen's death, she uttered one shriek and expired: this is, however, not strictly true. She was already very ill when the news came, and she lived a fortnight after it: it is quite probable, however, that it may have accelerated her death, although Count Fersen bitterly declares that she never cared a *sou* for the Queen, and all her thoughts were for herself.

All property left by the Princesse de Lamballe was sealed by the National Convention till August 1793, when it was ordered to be used for the national treasure: her nephew the Prince de Savoy-Carignan and her sister the Princesse Charlotte demanded restitution, declaring themselves to be her heirs, but it does not appear that they ever obtained it. It was necessary that the massacres of September should be ostensibly condemned by the authorities, and four months after they occurred, sixteen persons were formally accused of taking part in them, two having openly boasted of killing the Princesse. One of these was the negro Delorme, a brutal and horrible creature, whom she had once had in her service, treated kindly, and been obliged to dismiss for gross faults. All but one of the sixteen were, however, acquitted, and he—a man named Régnier—though condemned to twenty years' imprisonment, was pronounced to have done it 'without premeditation.' On the 18th January 1797, when France was cooling

somewhat to the horrors of this time, the *Gazette Française* has a further entry on the subject :—

'Grizon, convicted of having been one of the assassins of M. de Launay, Governor of the Bastille, and of having cut off the head of Madame la Princesse de Lamballe to please the Duc d'Orléans who inherited her wealth, has been condemned to death at Troy as the chief of the brigands who desolated the Department of L'Aube.'

It is said that in the end one only of the Princesse's murderers, Allaigre, died in his bed, and all the rest came to violent ends : Delorme was executed for killing the Deputy Ferraud. Madame Junot speaks of a mysterious man dwelling in a lonely cottage on the seashore, who was whispered to have been the chief actor in that dreadful business ; the police had orders from Napoleon to watch him with particular care, and he died one day 'of suffocation produced by an accident in eating, uttering the most horrid blasphemies, and in the midst of frightful tortures.'

It is not claimed for the Princesse de Lamballe that she was a woman of much firmness or strength of character ; clever people sneered at her simplicity of mind ; strong ones at her weakness of body. She had no love for intrigue, struggle, decision, anxious excitements, yet she, of all the Court, proved as a rock of friendship among shifting sands. In happier times people accused her of mercenary motives in demanding well-paid posts at Court ; but,

setting aside the fact that she asked for far less than most, her wealth was almost entirely spent upon the poor; she lived no life of special luxury herself. She had her little feminine jealousies and subterfuges, her fits of melancholy and depression, her wholly irrational sympathies and antipathies like other women. She hated having to give up all her pretty things, and while willing enough to bestow generously upon the poor, objected to reduce her expenses and her people at the arbitrary will of the National Assembly. Lauzun, and others, laughed at her constant fainting-fits, and held her able for no truly great emprise; but there was no faint-heartedness when the supreme moment came to choose between death and safety. Nor was the choice made in any moment of heated exaltation; it was taken deliberately and coolly, and she knew well what lot it was she had chosen when she wrote that Will and parted from her friends at Aix-la-Chapelle. Many women have done as much and more for love; but cheap sneers have been flung at the sincerity of a friendship between women; yet surely those who have read the history of this Princesse will acknowledge at least in her an exception to prove their rule.

Through all the darkest times of the Reign of Terror, masses were secretly said and sung for the repose of her soul; and on the 3rd September 1816 the Dowager Duchesse d'Orléans was present at a

great public mass held at the church of St. Leu, the walls of which were hung with funeral draperies marked with the monogram of the murdered Princesse. At the same time there was some question of erecting a monument to her in Paris, but this was never done, perhaps wisely, since it would merely have been destroyed in the next revolution: Louis Philippe, however, continued to hold a memorial service for her every 3rd September whilst he remained King.

These were the words spoken at the first service to her memory, held in the little chapel at Vernon on the very morning after her death:

'O all-powerful God! O God of mercy, divine providence! O holy and eternal Trinity! Believing very firmly in the immortality of the soul, we implore Thee very humbly to adorn that of Thy servant Louise de Savoy, the unfortunate princess, with the radiant crown of the martyr; and to admit her to the shining company of the elect, with them in Thy celestial home to sing eternally to the glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. De Profundis.'

NOTE

INTEREST in the tragic fate of the Princesse de Lamballe was roused very shortly after her death, and as early as 1801 a book, ostensibly compiled by a confidential friend, was published in Paris under the title of *Mémoires historiques de Marie Thérèse Louise de Carignan, princesse de Lamballe, une des principales victimes immolées dans les horribles journées des* 2 *et* 3 *septembre* 1792, *publiés par Madame Guenard.* Madame Guenard was the author of several romances, and this book was sheer romance, teeming with anachronisms and errors such as no one who had enjoyed the least intimacy with the Princesse could possibly have perpetrated. Madame de Lâge heard of the publication, procured an early copy, and became furiously indignant at what, with her usual energy, she denounced as *une cochonnerie abominable.* She hastily consulted with Madame de Las Cases, Madame de Pardaillon, M. de Clermont, and other of the late Princesse's friends, and with their full approval sent for the deceased lady's steward and ordered him to write to all the chief newspapers in Paris to say that the friends of the Princesse publicly advertised that the Memoirs just published were not only not written by her, as was easy to tell by their style, but that every fact in them was either untrue or given in ignorance by a person knowing nothing of the intimate habits of the Princesse. That her friends were ready to render justice to the intentions of the author (who had certainly painted the Princesse's character in an amiable light), but that it is always dangerous to write of subjects one knows nothing about, especially when persons are still living who can refute every word: that no one of the Princesse's household had ever heard of Madame Guenard, and could only suppose, if she had ever belonged to it, that she was some cookmaid who had never penetrated further than the scullery. Certain particularly glaring errors were then mentioned to prove the absolute untruthfulness of the book;

but in spite of all this, it seems to have enjoyed a good sale, and was even reprinted in Brussels thirteen years later.

A somewhat similar romance, also pretending to be written by an intimate friend of the Princesse, was published in English in 1826 with the title *Secret Memoirs of the Royal Family in France during the Revolution, etc., now first published from the journal, letters and conversations of the Princess Lamballe by a Lady of Rank in the confidential service of that unfortunate princess.* This work is, if possible, more absurdly incorrect and untrustworthy than Madame Guenard's effusion; and its authorship has at various times been assigned either to Catherine Hyde, Comtesse de Broglio Solari, or to Helen Maria Williams. Though written much in the haphazard style of the latter lady, however, the political views expressed in it are too much at variance with her known opinions to render this at least a probable solution. The *Secret Memoirs* were republished as recently as 1895, but can of course only be interesting as an historical curiosity.

In 1864 M. Mathurin de Lescure published the first authentic Life—*La Princesse de Lamballe,* in which, though it is true he inserts some doubtful letters, the famous 'English Letter' amongst them, he has at the same time been at the greatest pains to collect information from every contemporary Memoir that can throw any possible light upon the Princesse's character, career, and friends. The result is a book of singular charm, and a mine of curious detail and research, even though care needs to be exercised in the acceptance of all his facts: but M. Georges Bertin's production, *Madame de Lamballe d'après des documents inédits,* published in 1888, is undoubtedly the most standard and trustworthy work upon the subject. Neither Bertin nor Lescure have ever been translated into English.

Madame de Lâge's invaluable *Souvenirs d'Émigration* was published in 1869, and much sympathetic mention is made of the Princesse in all the Memoirs of the period; those of Madame de Tourzel and her daughter being in fact our only authority for the deeply interesting chronicle

of the weeks spent by the three ladies in the prison of La Force. M. Paul Fassy's *Épisodes de l'Histoire de Paris*, and M. Lucien Lambeau's *Essais sur la mort de Madame la Princesse de Lamballe* contain almost all details it has been possible to gather of the unfortunate lady's murder: and for her earlier history such works as Count Barthélemy's *Les Princes de la Maison Royale de Savoie*, Honoré Bonhomme's *Le Duc de Penthièvre*, *Florian chez le Duc de Penthièvre*, Florian's *Mémoires d'un Jeune Espagnol*, the *Correspondance secrète entre Marie Thérèse et le Comte de Mercy Argenteau*, and E. Delille's *Journal de la Vie de Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans*, should be consulted. Almost all who lived through the Revolution wrote their Memoirs or recollections, and the field is immense: on the whole, too, the varying accounts agree marvellously, and there is very little discrepancy. A list of the most interesting follows, but it would be impossible to give the names of all.

Madame Campan's *Private Life of Marie Antoinette*, the Marquise de Créquy's *French Noblesse of the Eighteenth Century*, Gaston Maugras' *Duc de Lauzun and the Court of Marie Antoinette*, the Comte d'Hezecque's *Recollections of a Page at the Court of Louis* XVI., François Métra's *Gazette Anecdotique du règne de Louis* XVI., the *Life and Letters of Madame Elizabeth*, the *Diary and Correspondence of Count Fersen*, Auguste Ducoin's *Études Révolutionnaires*, A. Begis' *Curiosités Révolutionnaires*, the *Letters of the Marquise du Deffand to Horace Walpole*, Dr. John Moore's *Journal during a Residence in France*, H. Sclesinger's *Les Femmes du* XVIIIe. *Siècle*, and the *Mémoires of the Baronne d'Oberkirch*, *Bertrand de Moleville*, *Joseph Weber*, *Madame Vigée Lebrun*, *Madame de Genlis*, the *Comtesse Diane de Polignac*, the *Princesse de Tarente*, *Madame de la Rochejaquelin*, the *Marquis de la Rochefoucauld*, *Petit de Bachaumont*, *Madame Junot*, *Baron Hue*, *Hanet Clery*, and many others.

Victor Amadeo
1630-8.

Tomaso Francesco,
1596-1656.
Prince of Savoy-Carignan.

Francesco Giac
Died 1637.

uel Philibert.
ied 1709.

Eugène.
Married Olympe Mancini.

or Amadeo.
ied 1741.

'Prince Eugène.'

Seven others.

Victor Amadeo.
ied 1778.
ristine Henriette of
infels-Rothenburg.

Vi
Married Marie A

Thérèse Louise.
1749-92.
Married the
ice de Lamballe.
*

Four others.

Eugène.
Died 1785.
Married Mdlle. Magon de Boisgarein.

Joseph Marie,
Chevalier de Savoy.

Charles Emmani
1796-1802

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